AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD

AN INTRODUCTION

TO

MAHDAVI BELIEFS

By

HAZRAT SYED ALI YADULLAHI

Published
by
FARAH COMMITTEE
DUBAI (U.A.E.)
1996

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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE :

Two hundred years ago, Hazrat Syed Ali Yadullahi went to Makkah and Madina for Haj pilgrimage, performed the rituals and decided to stay on for a year to perform a second Haj on behalf of his mother, as stated in the preface. He divided his time equally between the two holy cities. At Makkah, he discussed Mahdavi faith and tenets with the local *ulema* (scholars). King Sharif Ghalib joined the debate and asked for an authentic book on Mahdavism for further study. Having none at hand, Hazrat Syed Ali wrote one on the spot for the king.

The book, AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD, is in Arabic. In the last hundred years, it has been translated into Urdu twice and published thrice. It has all the elements of an expository discourse on and serves as an introduction to Mahdavi faith and beliefs. This English translation is intended for the new generation which knows English and cannot read and understand Arabic and/or Urdu.

The original Arabic text and, to some extent, its Urdu translations, which had scholars as its target readership, are in the style of an extempore oration, repeating at times a given idea in three or even four consecutive sentences. Besides, the elaborate discussions about the nuances of Arabic grammer and syntax, so convincing to the Arabic scholars, are difficult for the ordinary English reader to comprehend and appreciate. Highly technical among these have been omitted in part but care has been taken to follow the sequence of ideas throughout as meticulously as possible. Hence, this is not a verbatim translation of the orginal Arabic text or either of its two Urdu versions.

I have already dealt with at some length the need for rendering our religious texts in English and the problems a translator faces in doing so in my note to the English translation of AQIDA SHARIFA of Hazrat Syed Khundmir, published in 1994. I feel I need not repeat them.

The first translation of AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD into Urdu was done by Hazrat Syed Ashraf Shamsi Yadullahi, the great great grandson of the author, Hazrat Syed Ali Yadullahi, and was published twice. The second Urdu translation was done by Maulana Syed Nusrat Alam and published in early 1980s. Both have been used for this English version. Help was sought and readily given by Mufti Syed Yaqub Ishaqi (Channapatna), Maulana Syed Nusrat Alam (Hyderabad) and others. My grateful thanks to them as also to Maulvi Muhammad Shihabuddin Nadvi for his help and permission to use his Furqania Academy Trust Library in Bangalore. While they and others assisted me with their valuable suggestions, any mistakes found in this book are entirely mine and none other is responsible for them.

Last, but not the least, I also thank the Farah Committee, Dubai, UAE for their generous financial assistance for the publication and Maulvi Abul Fatah Syed Jalaluddin Yadullahi for his help in arranging the printing, publishing and distribution of this book.

Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi S/o. Hazrat Syed Alam Yadullahi
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PREFACE

Allama Syed Ali Yadullahi alias Makki Baday Miyan, an eminent scholar and spiritual guide *(murshid)* of his time and a disciple and vice-regent *(khalifa)* of Hazrat Syed Qasim of Kurnool, put his trust in Allah and went on Haj pilgrimage in a manner, difficult to come by now and hereafter.

He set out to Holy Makkah in 1216 AH and, after performing Haj, stayed on for a year for a second performance on behalf of his mother. Half his time was spent in Madina where he discussed the Mahdavi faith with the *ulema* (scholars). His arguments were convincing but the *ulema* would evade by saying : "You get the upper hand due to your eloquence but we are not satisfactorily convinced".

Allama Syed Ali then asked them to get the matter settled through a reference to the soul of Prophet Muhammed and the result should be acceptable to both parties. The ulema backed out.

During his stay in Makkah, the local *ulema* started a debate on the appearence of Imam Mahdi. Word of it spread and the ruler, Sultan Sharif Ghalib, himself joined it. After a few sittings, he came to the conclusion that the matter, important as it was, could not be thoroughly discussed in those meetings. "If you have a book on Hazrat Syed Muhammed of Jaunpur being the promised Mahdi, I would study it and, if I have any doubts, I would discuss them with you," he told Allama Syed Ali.

Since Allama Syed Ali had no such book on hand, he wrote one with the title, AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD, in Arabic and sent it to the Sultan, who was impressed but said "Had there been no obligation of *tark-e-duniya* (roughly translated, renunciation), I would have joined you as your disciple".

Besides him, a majority of the *ulema* too expressed similar views. However, all began to give great respect to him. After performing the second Haj, he returned to India.

He brought a copy of the book with him. It was handwritten and later, much copied. Due to passage of time and copying, mistakes crept in the duplicate manuscripts available a century later. Allama Syed Ashraf Shamsi Yadullahi, great great grandson of the author, revised the text with the help of various manuscripts, corrected and translated it into Urdu. The Arabic text and its Urdu translation was published by Allama's nephew, Syed Musa Yadullahi (at the beginning of the fourteenth century AH). The book is out of print now, (i.e., in 1950's).

Ijma-e-Fuqara-e-Guroh-e-Mahdavia (Channapatna) has decided to re-print its Urdu translation in view of its importance, so that it benefits all those who have a heart free of prejudice and bigotry and who think it is their duty to support truth and oppose falsehood.

Syed Alam Yadullahi
Maulvi Kamil, Munshi Fazil
President,
Ijma-e-Fuqara-e-Guroh-e-Mahdavia,
Channapatna, Mysore State.

HAZRAT SYED ALI YADULLAHI

Excerpt from the writings of Afzal-ul-Ulema Hazrat Syed Najmuddin :

Hazrat Miyan Syed Ali Yadullahi alias Makki Baday Miyan was born in 1156 AH (1743 AD). He made fealty to Hazrat Syed Qasim Sahib Miyan of Kurnool, in Andhra Pradesh. His later mystic association *(ilaqa)* is with Hazrat Roshan Miyan of Erode in Tamil Nadu.

He was about eleven years old when his father, Hazrat Syed Sharif died. In the initial stages, he was taught by his father.

Hazrat Syed Sharif alias Abji Miyan had handed over his Daira at Kurnool to his brother Hazrat Miyan Syed Dawood, who also became his successor. He advised his son, Hazrat Syed Ali, to go to Hazrat Syed Qasim and be in his company to learn thereligious, mystic and divine precepts and practices.Hazrat Syed Qasim was the cousin of Hazrat Syed Sharif.

After the death of Hazrat Syed Sharif, Hazrat Syed Ali alias Makki Baday Miyan came to Cuddapa in Andhra Pradesh. Hazrat Syed Qasim too migrated to Cuddappa from Arcot after the death of his father Hazrat Syed Manjhu and uncle Hazrat Syed Yahiya. Here Hazrat Syed Ali became the disciple of Hazrat Syed Qasim and started his education.

Since Hazrat Syed Ali was the scion of a noble family,Nawab Abdul Haleem Khan, the ruler of Cuddapa, paid a monthly stipend of Rs. 60/-, a princely sum of money in those days. This continued till the completion of his education in twelve years during which he became a master of all religious branches of knowledge. He renounced the world (*tark-e-dunya*) and took the oath of fealty as *tarik-e-dunya* at the age of about twenty three years on the hands of Hazrat Syed Qasim and continued to remain in the latter's company. It was during this period that he memorised the Holy Quran. He had great mystic achievements to his credit. He was affable and of a pleasant temperament. He was of medium height, fair and very handsome.

Hazrat Syed Ali's father, Hazrat Syed Sharif had his Daira at Zahrapur in Kurnool. Hazrat Syed Sharif had handed it over to his younger brother Hazrat Syed Dawood, who, on his death bed, told his son-in-law Hazrat Roshan Miayn that he had bequeathed the Zahrapur Daira to Hazrat Syed Ali alias Makki Baday Miyan. On hearing the news of the death of Hazrat Syed Dawood, Hazrat Syed Ali offered the Zahrapur Daira in the name of Allah to his guide *(murshid)* Hazrat Syed Qasim, who moved from Cuddapa to Kurnool and settled there. Hazrat Roshan Miyan handed over the Zahrapur Daira to him in accordance with the will and last teslament of Hazrat Syed Dawood. Since Hazrat Syed Qasim had no male children, Hazrat Syed Ali became the successor and guide *(murshid)* of Zahrapur Daira after the death of Hazrat Syed Qasim on 29th Shaban, 1190 AH (15th October, 1772) at the age of 75.

Hazrat Syed Ali, after making necessary preparations spread over many

years, left for Makkah and Madina for Haj pilgrimage and spent a long time there. During his stay in the two holy cities, he preached the Mahdavi faith and beliefs. At Makkah he wrote the book *Al-Qaul Al-Mahmood fil Mahdi Al-Mauood*\ and sent a copy of it to Amir Ghalib Sharif of Makkah with a covering letter.

On receiving the book, Amir Ghalib Sharif came to Kaa'ba, where Hazrat Syed Ali was staying in seclusion *(aitekaf)*. He had a battery of *ulema* (religious scholars) with him. During the conversation the Amir of Makkah said :"if your beliefs had not included *tark-e-dunya* (renunciation), all the people of Makkah would have pledged fealty to you." Hazrat Syed Ali said "it was easy for the *bandagan-e-khuda* (servants of Allah) to renounce the world because Allah says : "Qul Mata' ud dunya qaleel" (Say : worldly belongings are meagre).

The Amir of Makkah invited Hazrat Syed Ali to breakfast the next morning. Hazrat Syed Ali said he did not visit the houses of the worldly people. This politely rejected offer had astonished the Amir. After a short pause, the Amir told his companions that if they did not take care of the respected elderly personality, who had put his trust in Allah, it would not astonish him that the Shaikh might cause a calamity to the city. The next day the Amir sent a large quantity of food and fruits to Hazrat Syed Ali, who distributed it all among the *fuqara* (the indigent).

Hazrat Syed Ali stayed in Makkah for a longtime, so much so that Makki (of Makkah) became a part of his name. After performing Haj, he went to Madina and preached the Mahdavi faith and beliefs there. No *alim* (Islamic scholar) could overcome Hazrat Syed Ali in debate. Finally, they asked for a miracle. They said : "If your beliefs and faith are true, you touch the lock of the mansoleum of the Prophet, and the lock should open without a key and fall down".

Hazrat Syed Ali said he would reply the next day. During the intervening night he wept, cried and prayed to Allah. Obviously, he got the permission from the Prophet to perform the miracle. He told the *ulema* the next day that he was prepared to work the miracle. The *ulema* were astonished. Consulting among therself, they said : "if the Shaikh's miracle works, we would have to accept his beliefs and faith". They, then, backed out.

Hazrat Syed Ali died at the age of 63 on 19th Jamadi-II, 1219 AH (26th September, 1804 AD), after his return from Makkah to Kurnool where he was laid to eternal rest.

PUBLISHERS NOTE

The Members of the FARAH COMMITTEE, Dubai, U.A.E., are pleased to publish the English translation of AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD, by Hazrat Syed Ali Yadullahi alias Makki Baday Miyan. The translator is Faqir Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi of Channapatna, Karnataka, This is the second authoritative book on the beliefs of Guroh-e-Mahdavia, translated by him, the first being the AQIDA SHARIFA of Hazrat Syed Khundmir, which was published by us.

This is also the third book in English on the subject the Farah Committee has so far published, the earlier books being "AQIDA SHARIFA" and "MAHDI-E-MAOOD."

We are happy that our two earlier books have been received and acclaimed by the readers heartily, so much so that "MAHDI-E-MAOOD" was reprinted in U.K. and U.S.A.. This shows the need of our literature in English language for our comming generations.

We are thankful to all those who are associated in the publication of these books. May Allah bless them with iman.

FARAH COMMITTEE
Dubai, U.A.E.

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INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah, who has shown us the straight path and guided us to a strong Faith. We send our salutations to Muhammed, the Seal of the Prophets, his pious Caliphs and companions, and particularly to our Master, Hazrat Mahdi Al-Mauood, eminent among the Firsts and the Lasts.

This tract, complete and categorical, about the life and teachings of Imam Mahdi Al-Mauood Syed Muhammad (of Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, India), *Khaleefatullah* (the Viceregent of Allah), is written by Syed Ali, son of Syed Sharif, son of Syed Ali, son of Syed Yadullah, son of Syed Musa, son of Syed Jalal, son of Syed Khundmir, son of Syed Yaqoob, son of Syed Mahmood, son of Syed Muhammad, Mahdi-Al-Mauood.

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BROTHERS : Understand this well that whenever a Viceregent (Caliph) of Allah is sent into the world, differences crop up among the people and three groups emerge :

The first group accepts him as Allah's Viceregent and reposes Faith (*iman*) in him. The second rejects him. And the third does neither and looks for justification to accept or reject him.

This is what happened when Imam Mahdi came and proclaimed his identity as commanded by Allah. The Muslim Ummah got divided into three groups. The first group was ours who accepted him. The second group rejected him, started quarrelling and threw doubts upon his claim. The third group kept quiet and continued its search for the proof of Mahdi's claim.

In this tract, we address the third group which is in search of the truth. It is like a patient seeking medication or the thirsty person in search of sweet water at noon.

We now bring the truth to the notice of the seekers. These sacred facts are about and in proof of Imam Mahdi. After studying them, if the seeker comes to the conclusion that we are against the Ahl-e-Sunnat [1], it is his duty to guide us (to the right path). Otherwise, it is his duty to help us.

EARLY YEARS

Imam Mahdi's father was among the noble *Sadat* [2] regular in prayers, voluntarily submitting to the divine will and laws of *Shariat.*[3] His mother, too, was a pious woman. The Imam was a descendant of Imam Hussain,[4] son of Hazrat Ali,[5] through both his father and mother.

His mother's name was Amina.[6] Prophet Muhammed had said that the names of Imam Mahdi and his parents would be similar to those of his own and his parents.

After saying her *ta-haj-jud* [7] prayers on one occasion, Hazrat Amina sat in meditation as usual. She felt drowsy. Suddenly, it appeared to her that the sun rose and vanished in her tunic. She shivered and fainted on the prayer-mat. The word of her collapse spread. Neighbours thronged to her house and some near relatives went into her room. They tried to give her medicines. All efforts, however, failed.

Meanwhile, Hazrat Amina's brother, Qayyam-ul-Mulk, who was endowed with divine inspiration and revelation, arrived on the scene. After seeing his sister's condition, he divined the truth and told the people around that she was neither ill nor possessed; there was no need for medication as she was overawed by divine revelations *(tajalliat)*.

Later, when Hazrat Amina recovered, she told her brother about her vision before fainting. Qayyam-ul-Mulk asked her not to talk about it. He also told her that she would give birth to the Seal of the Saint-hood *(Khatim-ul-Vilayat)*.

Hazrat Amina conceived towards the end of the year 846 AH (1442 AD). In the fourth month of pregnancy, she repeatedly heard voices saying : "Mahdi has arrived".

When the new-born arrived, the light of divine guidance spread and the darkness of ignorance melted away. At birth, the baby was clean and his tiny hands covered his private parts: when his body was covered with a cloth, he would withdraw his hands.

No fly would ever sit on his body : he was divine light *(nur)*. When he cried, his voice was sweet, cheerful and captivating; listeners were attracted.

The idols in the temples of the Imam's native town, Jaunpur, fell on their faces.

Shaikh Danial of Jaunpur was a God-fearing and devout saint and had access to divine revelations. On the night of Imam Mahdi's birth, the Shaikh heard, as did others, a voice reciting the Quranic Verse : "And say : Truth hath come and falsehood has vanished away. Lo ! falsehood is ever bound to vanish". (XVII, 81). The Shaikh thanked Allah for the glad tidings about the vanishing of falsehood. Then he went into meditation to find out the secret behind the divine voices.

Imam Mahdi's father, Hazrat Syed Abdullah,[8] met and told the Shaikh that, prior to the birth of the baby, Prophet Muhammad had directed him in a dream to call the child Muhammad. Accordingly, he had named the child Abul Qasim[9] Syed Muhammad. Hazrat Abdullah said the baby had a bright and conspicuous forehead, a prominent nose, joined eye-brows and wheatish complexion.

The first words, the Imam spoke were : "Mahdi has come" and "The Truth is revealed".

On the advice of the Shaikh, the child was admitted, at the age of four, to the Shaikh's school which, at the time, had over 1,400 students specialising in Logic, Philosophy and Theology. The Shaikh treated the Imam with great respect to the annoyance of his elder brother, Hazrat Syed Ahmed. The Shaikh had taken note of the elder brother's jealousy.

An elderly person used to visit the Shaikh daily in the mornings and evenings. One day the Shaikh asked Hazrat Syed Ahmed, elder brother of the Imam, if he knew who the visitor was. He replied in the negative. To the same question, the Imam replied : "He is Hazrat Khizr." [10]

The Shaikh's students often asked questions which even great *ulema* (religious scholars) found difficult to answer. Ultimately, the questions were directed to the Imam (who was then of a tender age). He would instantly solve the problems. Thus the Imam become famous for his knowledge, understanding and interpretation of the scriptures attracting scholars from far and wide with their problems.

The scholars realised the eminence of the Imam, became convinced of his prowess and started calling him *"Asad-ul-Ulema"* (Lion among the Learned). This title was formally conferred on him at the age of twelve.

When Hazrat Khizr divined that the Imam was Mahdi,[11] he took the oath of fealty *(Bai'at)*. The Imam taught him *"Zikr-e-Khafi"* (mystic remembrance of Allah). On a suggestion from Hazrat Khizr, Shaikh Danyal followed suit. This was in accordance with the Hadith, narrated by Hazrat Sauban[12] that Prophet Muhammad said : "When you come to hear of the appearence of Mahdi, go to him and take the oath of fealty as his disciple *(murid)*, even if you have to crawl on ice to reach him, as he is the Mahdi and Caliph of Allah."[13]

When the Imam's miracles started working, word about them spread. One of the important miracles was the slaying of an unjust and infidel king, Rai-Dalpat of Gaur-Bangala, who had a large complement of armed forces on foot and horse. Despite superior numbers and strength, the king was defeated by the Imam.

The outer manifestation of the miracles strengthens the Faith of the common man but the miracles, taken in by the senses, are looked down upon as carnal pride among the eminent religious leaders and saints. Hence, the companions of Imam Mahdi abstained from working miracles. They did not take pride in performing them. To them, the outer manifestation of the miracles was a disgrace. However, they considered intrinsic miracles as laudable.

An intrinsic miracle means a man's intense desire to achieve Allah's eternal approval. One should strive for it continuously, develop the virtue of

humaneness and not fall a prey to unholy doubts and evil suggestions.

After reaching this stage in the process of spiritual attainments, man begins his approach to Allah and tries to come as close to Him as he can. As a result of the religious training and rigorous regime, the evils of malice and stubbornness begin to vanish giving way to laudable virtues. He begins to carefully observe the laws of Allah. In word and deed, he strictly adhers to the limits laid down by Allah and avoids things prohibited by Shariat. These are the intrinsic, also called great, miracles. The Mahdi and his disciples had imbibed these qualities.

When the Imam reached the age of forty, Allah told him : "I have made you the Mahdi and the Seal of *Vilayat-e-Muhammadi* (Muhammadan Sainthood). Invite the people to the faith of Allah. The call may be unpleasant to your opponents. Your call to the Muslim Ummah is general and common as was the call of Prophet Muhammad.

In obedience to the command from Allah, the Imam claimed that he was Mahdi. Soon after, people started opposing him as was the habit of the earlier people. The opposition assumed the proportions of open hostility. Mahdi silently suffered them but remained steadfast in his claim and mission. Many groups, clans and tribes blamed him. Although the number of his devotees was small, the burnished swords of his opponents did not deter him. His claim was based on sound logic but people did not listen to the voice of reason.

Oppression of the Imam and his disciples was the order of the day. However, he was indifferent to the rich and powerful, but entertained the poor. His mission was to abolish exploitation and oppression. Despite oppression and violence, the Imam behaved with great equanimity and composure.

MIGRATION

The Imam took to mirgation[14] in accordance with Quranic injunctions. To decree the defaulters in migration as hypocrites, he quoted the Verse:

"When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls, they say: 'In what (plight) were ye?'

"They (the souls) reply : 'Weak and oppressed were we in the earth'.

"They say : 'Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourself away (from evil) ?'

"Such men will find their abode in Hell, What an evil refuge!" (IV : 97).

This Verse points out that migration is inevitable when one is weak, and the penalty for not migrating is an abode in Hell. This shows that the punishment is for non-observance of an obligation *(wajib)*. Hence, when one is down and out with no power to propogate (the religion), migration becomes obligatory. Baizavi,[15] too, holds that the Verse makes migration obligatory. One has to migrate from a place where religion *(deen)* cannot be established.

Prophet Muhammad said : "Whoever migrates from one place to another in love of (or to preserve) the religion, even through it may be a short distance (less than a foot) away, he will be entitled to go to Paradise, and remain in the company of the Prophets Abraham and Muhammad."

The author of Tafseer-e-Mudarik[16] says that a migrant is one who had left his hearth and home for the exigencies of the religion *(deen)*, and that migration in times to come would be similar to that at the beginning of Islam.

This being the situation, we can say that migration is not confined to any particular stretch of time. When one has no power or freedom to profess, practice and propogate the laws of Shariat, migration becomes obligatory. The question is what are the chances of migration.

This is the truth. The inference is that migration becomes obligatory when one has no authority, freedom or facilities to worship Allah, enforce His commandments and prevent people from actions prohibited by Him. It was under similar circumstances, when the infidels of Makkah had made it impossible for the faithful to worship Allah, Prophet Muhammad migrated to Yathrib (Madina), where the profession, practice and propogation of Islam became easy.

Imam Mahdi too faced similar circumstances and the commandments relating to *Vilayat-e-Muhammadi* (Muhammadan Sainthood) could not be effectively propogated. He then resorted to migration. For us, Mahdavis, therefore, migration becomes obligatory when the situation warrants it.

If anyone said that *Hijrat* (migration) meant going from *Dar-ul-Harab* (the abode of war) to *Dar-ul-Islam* (the abode of peace-Islam), he was wrong, because, if this contention is accepted, Prophet Muhammad's companions who migrated to a Christian country Habsha (Abyssinia) cannot be treated as *muhajirs* (migrants). This is wrong because they were the (first) *muhajirs* (of Islam).

And, according to Tafseer-e-Kabir,[17] when Abraham got isolated and wanted to leave the city, he migrated to where Allah led him.

It could be argued that a Hadith says that there is "no migration after the conquest of Makkah." The point to consider here is whether migration in this context means migration particularly from Makkah to Madina or towards Prophet Muhammad.

However, this Hadith does not categorically repudiate migration, because migration from *Dar-ul-Harab* to *Dar-ul-Islam*, or from a place where religious duties cannot be performed to where they can be, is valid and obligatory till Doomsday. This has also been stated in the *Sharah-e-Arbaeen*[18] by Krimani and Nowawi.

It cannot be said that the Quranic Verses sanctioning migration as

obligatory are abrogated (*mansookh*). The Arabic word "*Mansookh*" means to dismiss or to change. This has two aspects. When it is referred to Allah, it means that a given Verse is valid during the period of currency of a commandment of Allah. When it is referred to humankind, it may mean that it is no more in force.

In *Tauzeeh*,[19] it is stated that when the law-giver (*sharey*) knows the period during which a commandment would be in force, the second argument becomes only a statement. The commandment being absolute, it is not a side-issue but an obligation, a reality. The reason is that we do not know the period during which the commandment would remain in force. The second argument changes according to our information and knowledge.

Take a murder case, for instance. If it is attributed to Allah's knowledge, it would refer to the time of death. But when it is attributed to a human being, the murder is proved. And the murderer would be subject to its consequences. Besides, the murdered person is a dead body from its own point of view. But from our point of view, it is a changed reality. (The *Tauzeeh* argument ends here).

If the statement of the commandment is considered in relation to Allah as abrogated, it is tantamount to saying that Allah's knowledge is transitory and not eternal. However, Allah's knowledge is sacred and not subject to change. Hence, to a person who knows the will of Allah, no Quranic Verse remains abrogated. But, to a person who does not know the will of Allah, some of the Quranic Verses appear to be abrogated and some others abrogating.

In short, to the group of persons who know the will of Allah (like the Mahdavis), no part of Quran is abrogated. Hence, the Imam called persons who avoided migration as hypocrites (*munafiqs*).

The Hadith relating to the case of Ka'b-Bin-Malik has been reported in detail by *Muslim*[20] and *Bukhari*[21] and I give a summary of it here :

Ka'b says that he did not join Prophet Muhammad in the battles of Badr[22] and Tabuk[23] and had participated in all other wars. The Prophet had not remonstrated those who had not joined him in the battle of Badr. But when he returned from the battle of Tabuk, he went to the mosque and said his prayers of thanks-giving. Soon after, people who did not participate in the battle came and made their excuses. They were more than 80 in number. Prophet Muhammad pardoned them. Then Ka'b went and greeted him, he responded with a smile but appreared to be very angry. He ordered that nobody should even talk to Ka'b. Ka'b was alone. It looked as if nobody knew him; nobody would talk to him or take notice of his presence, even if he roamed the marketplace. One day Ka'b climbed the wall of his cousin Abi Qatada's house and greeted him. There was no response. Some forty days after the ban, an emissary of the Prophet told him that the Prophet had ordered him to stay away from his wife. Ka'b sent his wife

to her parents' house. Some ten days after this, a person called Ka'b and said : "Good News. The Prophet has permitted you to repent."

Nowawi says this Hadith had highlighted 27 important points. The tenth point is that the excuses of the hypocrites were acccepted. The eleventh point is that it was desirable to ostracise the defaulters to chastise them.

This shows that a person who avoids migration is a hypocrite and deserves punishment; he should be ostracised and separated from his wife.

In short, Imam Mahdi resorted to migration on the basis of the Quranic Verse quoted above.

The Imam choose to migrate. He declared he was Mahdi. And he concentrated on reforming and guiding the people. He always showered the divine light of Allah's blessings on his followers and disciples.

KINGS INVITED

The Imam sent letters to the kings, ministers, arisotrcrats, nobleman, judges & jurists, inviting them to inquire into his claim to be Mahdi, and either to accept him as such or kill him if found an imposter. The following is a summary of such letters :

"O mankind" : Understand this well that I am Muhammad, son of Abdullah, and the namesake of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah. Allah has made me the Seal of *Vilayat-e-Muhammadi* (Muhammadan Sainthood) and the Caliph of the Prophet's august followers *(ummah)*. I am he who had been promised to be sent during the Last Era. I am he about whom the Prophet had given advance information. I am he who has been mentioned in the sacred books of the earlier Prophets. I am he who had been described by groups of the Firsts and the Lasts. I am he who has been bestowd with the Caliphate of Allah. I am he who invites the people (created by Allah) to (come to) Allah at the bidding of His Prophet.

"And further, I am not, at the time of making the claim, intoxicated. I am in my senses. I am not in need of being brought to my senses. I have been provided with pure and clean food from Allah. I am in need of none other than Allah, The Eternal. I do not desire a throne or crown. I do not intend to become a ruler. I am not hankering after a dominion or authority. I consider them as absurd and filthy. I am your liberator from worldiness.

"The reason for this invitation is that I have been enjoined upon (on pain of Allah's displeasure) to invite you. Obedience to me is enjoined upon you by Allah. I convey my invitation to jinn and mankind, in the sense that I am the Seal of the *Vilayat-e-Muhammadi* and Caliph of Allah. Obedience to me is obedience to Allah and disobedience to me is disobedience to Allah. Accept my creed, so that you are liberated, and obey me.

"If you refute me, Allah will seize you. Save yourself from the punishment of the day (Doomsday) when mountains will be blown to smithereens.

"Do not go from this world when you face (spiritual) ruin (in the Hereafter). Choose the reward of the Hereafter. Do not sell it for counterfeit coins. I am telling you all this because you are intelligent. If you consider that I am concocting and maligning Allah, you are bound to inquire into my work (as the Caliph of Allah). Start the work fast.

"If you are inattentive to my work, it would mean that you are trying to refute me. You are capable of finding out the truth. If you allow me to continue to make (what you consider to be) false claim, you will be liable to divine punishment. On oath in the name of Allah, I say that Allah is enough as a witness to my claim that I am sent to prevent the annihilation of Muhammad's Ummah and cleanse it of its deviations. Never get deceived. Compare my words, deeds and facts with Quran, and only with Quran. And think over them. If they are in accordance with Quran, obey me. Otherwise, kill me. This is the best course for your salvation. Therefore, fear Allah and turn to Him with a humble heart. He is merciful to his servants. This advice is for those who listen with understanding."

The Imam's letters were read by the kings to whom they were addressed. They thought over it. And those, who were eternally guided by Allah, accepted the claim of Imam Syed Muhammad of Jaunpur as the Promised Mahdi.

THE JOURNEY

Imam Mahdi travelled to Gujarat,[24] Sindh,[25] Khorasan,[26] Qandahar[27] and Kabul.[28] He visited Makkah,[29] where between *rukn* and *muqam*, he announced his being the Imam Mahdi in the presence of a large number of people. This is in accordance with the prophecy of the Hadith.[30] The Imam also invited his listeners to the vision of Allah. Many faithful *(momineen)* including aristocrats, nobles, scholars and government officials, accepted his claim. Besides, in many cities in Sindh, Gujarat and Khorasan, nobles from various countries also reposed Faith in the Imam.

If the reader wants to know the details of the events at Makkah and about his miracles like the prostration *(Sajda)* of the fish and the hardships of the Imam's companions had to undergo during the voyage to Arabia, he should see the book *Rozat-ul-Anwar fi Ahwal Syed-al-Abrar*. In this tract, I (the author) have mentioned only the points relevant to and useful in discussions about the Imam and his mission.

Returning to the shores of India, the Imam intended to proceed to Sindh. Some of the Imam's companions suggested that he should be careful in his preachings as the ruler there, was vicious and irascible.

The Imam replied : "My preaching is an invitation to come to Allah *(dawat-il-Allah)*. Had it depended on your help, I would have followed your advice. But I invite people to Allah at His bidding. I need His help and support and I trust Him. I do not need the help of the people. I am not overawed by kings and rulers, their military might, entourages, power and grandeur. How dare you tell me that an intoxicated ruler, immersed in carnal lust, can prevent me from preaching the message of Allah ? It is quite possible that he might fear Allah and give up his drinking sprees after listening to my sermons...........".

The ruler came to one of the Imam's preaching sessions as a repentant and reformed man. Later, impressed by the Imam's miracles, he became an ardent disciple of the Imam.

In Sindh some of the Imam's miracles made the dumb and deaf start talking and hearing. For further details of the miracles, please see the book *Rozat-ul-Anwar fi Ahwal Syed-al-Abrar.*

THE CONTROVERSIES

It should be mentioned at this stage that people were engaged in controversies about Imam Mahdi.

There are two possibilities about the signs as described by Prophet Mohammad to identify Imam Mahdi when he comes : either all of them are found in a person or some of them are found and the others not.

If all the described signs are found in a person, there is no room for doubt and refusing to accept him as Imam Mahdi. The question of accepting one as such does not arise if all of them are not found in him.

Some of these signs are as follows : Imam Mahdi would be born in Makkah or Madina; Imam Mahdi will be a ruler and an emperor; Imam Mahdi and Jesus will come at one and the same time; Imam Mahdi will fill the earth *(al-arz)* with justice and fairplay; Imam Mahdi will distribute treasures (among the people); Syrian Army will advance to fight the Imam and on its way would sink into the soil.

The fact is that some of the traditions forcasting the signs of Imam Mahdi's advent, contradict each other. Some of them are not authentic. Some others authoritatively establish that Syed Muhammed of Jaunpur was Imam Mahdi.

We will now discuss the traditions which contradict each other.

The tradition, claiming Makkah as the birth-place of Imam Mahdi, contradicts the one which says Madina will be his birth-place.

The traditions say that Mahdi and Jesus would come at the same time. Other traditions say they would come at different times.

The tradition which predicts the sinking of the army into the soil has nothing to do with Imam Mahdi. Besides, this tradition is not applicable. because the signs have already appeared before the advent of Mahdi.

When there is obvious contradiction between the traditions. it is no use arguing that one is correct and the other wrong.

It is possible that this contradiction has emerged from (the versions of) various traditionists. The birth of a person with so many contradictory qualities is impossible.

Obviously, the prophecies are not to be taken literally. They are usually just a pointer to the obejectives of the prophecy.

Moses was informed in Torah[31] (Old Testament), for instance, that "We would send a prophet from among your brothers soon." Literally "brothers" would indicate that the impending arrival of the prophet would be from among the real brothers of Moses, or the children of Israel. But no such prophet was born in Arabian peninsula.

However, if the meaning of the word "brothers" is stretched to include cousins, the prophet was from among the progeny of Ishmael (Ismael). But this explanation was rejected by the Jews. They misled not only themselves but also others.

Similarly, the Injeel (New Testament) mentions that Jesus Christ had predicted the advent of the Prophet of Islam. However. the insistance on literal meaning of the prophecy misled the people. Jesus is quoted as saying that a person by name Ahmed would be born soon and people should accept him as he is the Divine Light *(nur)* and Guidance *(hidayat)*. No prophet with the name of Ahmed was born. The prophet who was born was named Muhammad. The result is that the followers of Jesus Christ went astray since they could not associate Ahmed with Muhammad.[32] They though, that the birth of Muhammad did not fulfil the prophecy.

Again in Torah, it was mentioned that Allah would come on Mount Sinai (Taurus Mountains) along with angels close to Him and shine on Seir.[33]

If one goes by the literal meaning of the prophecy it is evident that God did not manifest Himself on the peaks of Faran (Paran) Mountains. How can the Jews accept a person who emerged on the Mountain of Faran (near Makkah) along with a few voiceless poor? He who emerged on the mountains near Makkah in Arabia was Muhammad.

The prophecies cannot be and should not be explained literally. Their real purpose has to be taken into consideration. The trouble arises when the real meaning is adhered to. Even learned people cannot understand and explain them. How can the people with average or below average intellect understand the

purpose of the divine prophecies.

Similar is the case with the prophecies about Imam Mahdi. They cannot be correctly understood and explained by resorting to the literal meaning of the terms used in the traditions of Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explain prophetic signs in terms of the events accompanying the appearance of Imam Mahdi.

Obviously, the identification of a person is not difficult if his birth literally and strictly follows the signs described in the prophecy. We can go to the extent of saying that this is not possible, because it is not necessary that every human being should be blessed with Faith *(iman)* in the Unknown. Had it been the divine will to make every one a faithful, Allah's prophets would not have been repudiated by their own people despite obvious signs in the scriptures. The Jews repudiated the prophethood of Jesus Christ and his being the Messiah, despite prophecies in the scriptures. Similarly, both the Jews and Christians repudiated Prophet Muhammad. Had the prophets not been repudiated, the entire human-kind would have been the follower of one religion. Religious differences would have been wiped out. Allah has said in Quran : "If it had been thy Lord's will, they all would have believed, — all who are on Earth (S.X. : 99). It follows from this that the variety of religious followings shows that the prophets were not born strictly in accordance with the letter of the prophecies. It can now be said that the signs in the prophecies about Imam Mahdi too fall in the same category. It follows that the signs common to all the prophecies about Imam Mahdi will be authentic and categorical proof.

But the attributes of the Imam described in them contradicting each other cannot be treated as authentic. The principles of Fiqh prove that contradictory attributes cancel each other. These traditions, of course, prove that Imam Mahdi will definitely come, but the attributes described in them are not fit to be discussed.

DOUBTS CLARIFIED

Some of the questions raised earlier in this tract will now be answered.

1. As for the first question, it must be clarified that there is great contradiction in traditions about the birth-place of the Imam. Some traditions say that the Imam would be born in Makkah. Others indicate Madina as his birth-place. Some other traditions say that the Imam will be born at a place other than these two cities. It is impossible and ludicrous to believe that a person can be born at so many places at a given time. Under the circumstances, the correct place of his birth would be the place where he was actually born. The Imam was born at Jaunpur in India and therefore, all other prophecies would become null and void.

2. The answer to second question is that when the Imam is a deputy (Caliph) of Allah, he cannot be a king, which is neither necessary nor obligatory. He will, therefore, be born exactly like other deputies (Caliphs) of Allah like Saleh, Shu'eyb, Lot, Jesus, Yahya (John), Noah and others. As the spiritual domain of prophets is angelic, the Caliphate of Imam Mahdi is bound to be of divine light.

3. The third point is about the distribution of treasures which means the dissemination of the knowledge about spiritual secrets and divine light. This is a particular attribute of the Prophets (and this is what is meant here). As for the division of money and valuable or worldly wealth, he did not lag behind even in that. When he was in the town of Mando, now in Madhya Pradesh, India, he distributed wealth that made beggars rich, gold and silver flowed unhindered and people became affluent.

4. Jesus Christ and Imam Mahdi are both Caliphs of Allah. They are also Imams in their own right. It follows that the two cannot come into the world at one and the same time. Hadith enjoins that when two Caliphs take the oath of fealty from the people, kill one of them. Therefore, it can now be said that the possibility of two Caliphs of Allah appearing at the same time can be ruled out. Nowawi also quotes consensus (ijma) on the issue.

5. The earth (al-arz) being filled with justice during the time of Mahdi too is not correct because he is the defender and protector of the followers *(Ummah)* of Muhammad. This has been interpreted to mean that the whole of the earth would be filled with justice. How can he fill the whole of the earth with justice, particularly when Prophet Muhammad himself did not do so? Imam Mahdi is the follower of Prophet Muhammad. It is, therefore, absurd to believe that the quantum of justice and guidance of the Mahdi could be larger or greater than that of Prophet Muhammad. It is also not acceptable that the entire world would be filled with justice because the whole of mankind would have to embrace our religion. This is impossible. Allah says : "If Allah so willed, He could make you all one people". (XVI : 93).

   Again, "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed, — all who are on earth." (X : 99).

   Further, Allah says : "If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance; but the word from Me will come true, 'I will fill Hell with jinn and men all together'. (XXXII : 13).

   Here the Quranic Verses (specifically) state that Allah does not wish the whole mankind to respose Faith (in Allah's religion), because He

has expressed the intention to fill the Hell with all jinn and men, except those who are destined to be faithful *(momineen).*

This shows that when a single religion *(deen)* cannnot encompass the entire earth, how can it in its entirety be filled with justice?

And the person who is not familiar with these realities and cannot see the meaning of the Hadith with the result that he is confused and confounded.

But if you want to compare the above Quarnic Verses with the Hadith about "filling the Earth (al-arz) with justice", try to understand it this way; the Arabic term "al-arz" should be interpreted to mean "a part of the earth".

Take for instance the Quranic Verse : "Before this we wrote in the Psalms (of David) after the Massage (given to Moses); "My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth", (al-arz. (XXXI : 105).

Here the term "the earth", (al-arz) points either to the sacred part of the earth or the floor of Paradise. It does not mean the entire earth.

Or take the Hadith reported by Abdullah-bin-Omer in Bukhari : "In his last days, Prophet Muhammad said his night *('Isha)* prayers with us. After concluding the prayers, he stood up and said : "Shall I inform you that whoever is on the earth (al-arz) now, shall not survive after one hundred years; all will die".

Here the term "the earth" (al-arz) means the part of the earth on which stood the city of the Prophet *(Madina-tur-Rasool).* "The earth" here does not mean the whole earth, nor that persons who were living at that time would not be there after one hundred years anywhere on the earth.

Taking the Arabic grammatical nuances into consideration, the Haidth about the filling of the earth (al-arz) with justice would mean that Imam Mahdi would fill with justice a part of the earth (al-arz) where he was and which was filled with oppression.

One could contend here that this would be tantamount to saying that Imam Mahdi's claim of being Mahdi did not encompass the whole body of Muslims *(Ummat-e-Muhammadia).* This contention would be absurd because Imam Mahdi was sent by Allah for the whole of the *Ummah*, whether it was residing at one part of the earth (al-arz) or a number of regions on the earth.

Further, what does the expression, "filling the earth with justice" mean? The purport of the expression is that the Imam would disseminate the information about the guidance *(Hidayat).* This is so because

it is beyond the realm of Imam Mahdi to make people reach the goal of guidance as it was beyond the realm of Prophet Muhammad. It will be recalled that Prophet Muhammad spared no effort to convince Abu Talib of the virtues of Islam and gave powerful arguments but Abu Talib (Bin Abdal-Muttalib) went with Abu Jahl (Bin-Hisham). He refused to be guided by Prophet Muhammad and happily followed Abu Jahl till the last breath of his life.

What does this indicate? It shows that making people reach the goal of guidance *(hidayat)* is the domain of Allah. This could not be done by Prophet Muhammad, Imam Mahdi or Jesus Christ. For Allah says : "If We had so willed, We could certainly have brought every soul its true guidance." (XXXII : 13). This further shows that guidance is the domain of Allah and none else can do anything. Allah says : "Lo thou (O Muhammad) guidest not who thou lovest". (XXVIII : 56).

The sixth question is about the Hadith on sinking into earth of an army. This does not apply to Imam Mahdi's signs. The Hadith does not refer to Imam Mahdi or the circumstances of his appearance to guide the people. Some of the traditions in which mention has been made of the sinking of the army into the earth are reproduced here.

A Hadith of Muslim says : Hafsa[34] quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that Baitullah[35], the holy shrine at Makkah, would be safe from the attack of the army whose middle guard will sink into the soil, when it reached Baida. Its vanguard would shout to inform the rearguard of the disaster and ask it to be careful. However, the vanguard and the rearguard and most of the others would sink into the soil. Only a few of the attacking army will survive to tell the tale of the destruction.

Another Hadith by Abudullah son of Sufwan quoted by of Muslim says : Umm Salamah[36] quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that a time would soon come when a group of people would take refuge in the Ka'bah,[37] Holy Shrine at Makkah, it would have neither a difinite number nor property. An army would be sent to subdue the group; and when the army reached Baida, it would sink into the soil.

Do the two traditions quoted above indicate that the incident of the sinking of an army into the soil is related to any particular time or group of people? When it is not associated particularly with time or a group of people, how can it be associated with Imam Mahdi? In fact, these traditions have nothing to do with Mahdi. Some of the authentic traditions prove that the story of an army being sunk into the soil occured during the period of Ibn Zubayr.

The Muslim quotes Ubayd Allah Al-Qibtiya as saying the Harith bin

Rabee'ah and Abd Allah bin Safwan went to Umm Salamah and asked her about the army which would sink into the soil during the period of Ibn Zubayr. Umm Salamah quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that a person would take refuge in Ka'bah and an army would attack him; when it reached Baida, it would sink into the soil. I (Umm Salamah) asked : "O Messenger of Allah : what would happen to the person who disliked them". The Prophet said : "He too will sink into the soil. But he will rise on the Doomsday in accordance with his intentions."

In his Sharah, Nowawi says that Qazi Ayaz has quoted Abul-Walid Katani as saying that Umm Salamah died in 59 AH (about 680 AD) during the Caliphate of Mu'awiyah (bin Abu Sufyan).

If this is so, Umm Salamah has not seen the period of Ibn Zubayr and to argue about the incident of the sinking of the army by her narration is not correct. However, Qazi Ayaz also says that Umm Salamah died in the period of Yazid (bin Mu'awiyah).

The author of this book[38] *(AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD)* says that Qazi Ayaz's contention about the death of Umm Salamah is not reliable because of his two contradictory versions.

But Nowawi says the report about Umm Salamah's death during the reign of Yazid is correct because the person, who has narrated Ibn Zubayr's war with Yazid, and others like Abu Bakr bin Abd Al-Bir who has in his book Iste'ab Fi Ma'arifat Al-Ashab[39] and Abu Bakr bin Abi Hutaima have said that Umm Salamah died during the period of Yazid. This shows that the report of Abul-Walid is weak because he alone has reported her death during Mu'awiyah's reign. However, a large number of people support the view that she died during Yazid's reign. This is the summary of Mohiyuddin Nowawi's analysis in his Sharah (commentary) of Muslim. This proves that the incident of an army's sinking in the soil related to the period of Ibn Zubayr. Hence, the sinking incident as one of the signs of Imam Mahdi should be rejected as wrong.

All this goes to show that the signs of Imam Mahdi, as mentioned in the Hadith apply correctly to Imam Mahdi. But the Hadiths which are not related to Imam Mahid, do not apply to him and it is not necessary that they should.

This is the answer to those who have argued during the current discusssions on the basis of some of the traditions, like those which have been discussed above. They fail to use their intellect and to listen to reason. This is where even learned people get confused. That is why I have gone into some detail on this subject in this tract.

MAHDI NOT A MUJTAHID

It is also necessary here to assert that Imam Mahdi is not a *mujtahid* (roughly translated, a prelate), because a *mujtahid* cannot hold an opinion which is always correct His opinion could be correct at times and wrong at other times. If Imam Mahdi were to be a *mujtahid,* he, too, would be correct at times and wrong at other times. This is absurd.

His being a *mujtahid* is absurd because Imam Mahdi is incapable of committing a wrong *(masoom-anil-khata)* by his being a Caliph of Allah *(Khaleefatullah)*. Authorities on Hadith like Ibn Majah, Hakim and Abu Nu'aym[40] are agreed that Imam Mahdi is *Khaleefatullah* who is innocent or incapable of committing mistakes. This means that Imam Mahdi cannot be a *mujtahid* who commits mistakes and is not innocent.

Secondly, a *mujtahid* is not innocent or incapable of committing mistakes. There is no clear and difinite statement in *Shariat* nor there is a rational argument anywhere that *mujtahid* too is innocent. Hence, he cannot be innocent. He, who says that Imam Mahdi is *mujtahid,* is deemed to have committed a serious mistake. Later in this tract, we will discuss Imam Mahdi's injunctions and the beliefs of the Mahdivis.

IN KHORASAN

As Imam Mahdi embarked upon his journey from Sindh, word of his impending arrival reached Khorasan, and covering long distances, Farah Governor Mir Zunnoon, a man of influence, dignity and authority, arrived at the Imam's camp, but pitched his royal tents some distance away.

Mir Zunnoon, pre-eminent even among mighty kings, also decided to test the veracity of the Imam's claim as Mahdi and repose faith in the Imam if the claim was true; otherwise, slay him. For, it was the duty of the rulers to discipline and warn the pretenders if the claim was spurious, because they would deceive the people by their mellifluous talk.

Mir Zunnoon arrived at a preaching session of the Imam with all his military paraphernelia, armed and mounted contingents with drawn swords. Imam Mahdi continued his sermon explaining the Quran. The venue was already packed to capacity. Despite a show of his strength, he could not find a place to sit among the audience.

Imam's *fuqara* (who had renounced the world) were usually looked down upon in the royal courts, but here they appeared as the heavently host to Zunnoon who was overawed. This left a lasting effect on him. As he could not get a place to sit, he stood restless in a corner till the Imam gestured him to sit down. Zunnoon was himself drowned in the ocean of the Quran's meaning as explained by Imam Mahdi.

Zunnoon's mental attitude towards Imam Mahdi had totally changed and he was in a fix by the time the sermon ended.

He asked Imam Mahdi : "I have heard that you claim to be Mahdi?"

Imam Mahdi said : "Yes, No doubt about it."

Zunnoon said : "I have seen in the Hadith that water would not drown, fire would not burn and sword would not cut Imam Mahdi."

Imam Mahdi replied : "O Amir : Try, If you want to."

Zunnnoon drew his sword, advanced towards the Imam menacingly and attacked him with full force. But no sooner than he had attacked, he himself fell to the ground. He was annoyed. He rose. The Imam asked him to try again. Zunnoon attacked again. He fell down again. Zunnoon was trembling in fear. The Imam asked him to try a third time. Zunnoon attacked and fell again. One of his arms was wounded and the other bruised. He was tired. This convinced Zunnoon of the veracity of Imam's claim.

When he came to, he openly admitted that the Imam was Imam Mahdi Mauood and the Caliph of Allah. He repented and requested the Imam to instruct him in the ways of true religion.

He swore fealty to the Imam and said : "Please order me to behead your enemies."

Imam Mahdi replied : "No, I do not need it. I do not seek the help of anybody other than Allah. I am not in need of your help. The question does not arise. But you can do one thing. Use your sword against your worst and most wicked enemy. That Enemy is your *nafs* (Lust)."

SOME SAYINGS OF THE IMAM

Imam Mahdi said : "Verily the companions of Prophet Muhammad included the migrants and the helpers (*muhajireen* and *ansar*), but there are only migrants with me."

Imam Mahdi said : "Proper Muhammadan sainthood is sealed with me."

Imam Mahdi said : "I am taught directly by Allah and He commands me directly."

PROPHETHOOD AND SAINTHOOD

Imam Mahdi said : "Allah instructs and commands me directly, and therefore, I say that I am taught without the medium of the angels and others." I (the author Hazrat Syed Ali) say, that the nature of Prophethood *(Nubuwat)* is not like this. Angelic medium is very necessary for Prophethood. At this stage, Allah does not directly communicate to any Prophet, but through divine revelation or inspiration (Wahi) while keeping himself undisclosed.

Allah says : "It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind a veil." (XLII : 51).

But the nature, particularly of absolute Sainthood *(Vilayat-e-Mutlaqa)*, which is to be sealed (by Imam Mahdi), is that there is no Angelic medium. It can be said that the absence of the angelic medium is a necessity. Because *vilayat* (sainthood) is one's being near to Allah and the compulsions of this nearness warrant that there should be no angelic medium between Allah and Mahdi.

Nubuwat (Prophethood) is the name of giving information (to the people) about the commandments of Allah. This gives, so to say, a sense of remoteness which needs a medium. Hence, there is obvious distinction between the two positions, *vilayat* and *nubuwat*.

THE QURAN

At this stage, it is very necessary to know that Quran explains everything. Past and future events, the causal shape of things to come, details about truth, particulars about earth and heavens — all this has been mentioned in Quran.

It is, therefore, that Allah says : "We have sent down to thee the Book explainng all things". (XVI : 89).

And every verse of the Quran is an ocean of meaning....... The Hadith says that the Quran has no verse which does not have an outer and an inner meaning and which does not have a beginning or an end (limit).

Explaining this Haidth, some of the *ulema* (Islamic scholars) have said that each Quranic Verse has sixty conceivable and many more invonceivable meanings.

Some say that Quran contains 277 branches of knowledge. Every word has an outer and an inner meaning, and Quran gives guidance towards comprehensive knowledge. Hazrat Ali, the forth Caliph of Islam, has said he could write a commentary of Quran's first chapter, the Fatiha (or Opening) voluminous enough to load on the backs of seventy camels.

Imam Fakhruddin Razi has said in his tafseer (commentary of Quran) that he could explain 10,000 precepts from the opening chapter, Fatiha, of the Quran. Not only this, he could explain 10,000 precepts from the expression, *A'uzo Billah*, alone, he says. They are not unimportant, redundant or absurd. They would be reliable and credible. In short, if a person understands every one of the many meanings of Quran and puts it into practice, it becomes evident of his progress to higher spiritual ranks. Each such action leads one to the next higher stage.

But his final ascendance to perfect realisation of the Ultimate Truth is not possible without the intercession of Prophet Muhammad, the seal of the

Prophets, and his faultless follower *(Taaba'e Ta'am)* Imam Mahdi, who were sent to spread the teachings of Ihsan *(beneficence)*.

Various branches of Quranic Knowledge can be divided into two catergories : the knowledge of the (right) path *(Shar'iah)* and commandments *(Ah'kam)*, and the other is the knowledge of Truth *(Haqiqat)* and beneficence *(Ihsan)*.

To explain these two branches of Quranic knowledge, two separate sets of terminology and style are needed. The first is the *Shariat*, used by Prophets and the second that of the *Haqiqat*, used by Imam Mahdi.

Hence, Prophet Muhammad used the *Shar'iah* terminology to issue his injuctions and adopted a counselling and sagacious attitude which did not provoke the hostility of the contemporaries.

SHAR'IAT AND HAQIQAT

People who converted to Islam in the beginning did not have the stamina to follow difficult injuctions. Hence, Prophet Muhammad did not promulgate commandments which were difficult to be put into practice. The commandments issued at the time were easy to practice. This was due to the Prophet's compassion and Allah's kindness, that this kind of sermonising attitude was adopted. Then, the principles of the religion and the precepts of the *Shar'iah* were taught slowly and gradually. Some of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad have expressed their profound gratitude to Allah and said that "We were idolators in the beginning. Had Prophet Muhammad heaped all the precepts and practices of the religion on us at one go and ordered us to put them into practice, it would have been a calamity for us. And probably we might never have entered Islam."

Prophet Muhammad taught the religion in stages till it was perfected and the teachings of *Shar'iah* had been completed. The process took 23 years.

At one time, Prophet Muhammad intended to start explaining the commandments in the terminology of *Haqiqat*, but Allah did not allow him to do this because this would have been difficult for the people to practise. Some idlers would have found excuses to avoid practising the precepts, had the *Haqiqat* been explained at that stage. The precepts and practices of *Haqiqat* been explained at that stage. The precepts and practices of *Haqiqat* are rather difficult. People had just converted to Islam and had not fully acquainted themselves with the *Shar'iah*, they would have found it despairing if they were compelled to go in for *Haqiqat*. Hence, by the commandments of Allah, Prophet Muhammad did not publicly preach *Haqiqat*.

Eminent scholar Rozbehan, too, has expressed the same opinion in his book *Arais-al-Bayan* and quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that people would have lost their heads and mankind remained ignorant if he had spoken in the terminology of *Haqiqat*. He, therefore, preached according to their level of

comprehension. He gave up preaching *Haqiqat* as Da'wat (call to come towards Allah). He preached *Haqiqat* to people who, in his opinion, had enough comprehending and sustenance abilities. He also told them to keep it a secret from common people because their intellect could not comprehend the divine precepts. According to a Hadith of Bukhari, Abu Hurayrah (Abd Ar-Rahman Ad-Dawsi) said: "I have treasured in my memory two stores of knowledge which I had received from the Messenger of God. One of them I have divulged; but if I divulge the other, ye would cut this throat," and he pointed to his own throat.[41]

The author of *Irshad-us-Sari* writes in his *Sharah* of Bukhari that the second "store" means the knowledge of the divine secrets which should be kept secret from the others and is particularly imparted to the people of wisdom ('irfan) and those who are discerning and God-fearing savants. In fact, this is the result of practice and knowledge of religious codes of conduct *(Shar'iah)*. This knowledge is acquired by people who spare no effort *(Mujahidat)* for it and once they achieve help and favour (from Allah), they continue their journey into the light of divine vision. They become the chosen people of Almighty.

TASK ASSIGNED TO MAHDI

Prophet Muhammad did not explain the commandments (pertaining to *Tariqat*) in the normal course of inviting *(da'wat)* the common people to the path of Allah. The task was assigned to the person who had been destined to, who was chosen for it from the Beginning *(azl)*, who was the seal of this sacred position, and who was from among the descendants of his (Prophet's) daughter, Fatima.

Prophet Muhammad has unequivocally said: "If there is only one day left (before the end of the world or Doomsday), Allah will lengthen it to an extent that a person from my descendants would be born; he is from my house. His name is my name; his father's name will be my father's name". (Abu Da'ud As'Sijistani's book of Hadith).

Prophet Muhammad emphasisted that accepting him (as Mahdi) and following him in the obervance of do's and don'ts of the religion was obligatory. He also emphasised that Mahdi would be the Caliph of Allah *(Khaleefatullah)*.

Hazrat Sauban has quoted Prophet Muhammad as saying that "three persons from among the sons of Caliphs will fight near the treasure *(knaz-khilafath)*, which none of them will get; then, black flags will appear from the east; they will fight bitterly; the fight will be (so bitter) the like of which was never fought; and then after all this, the Caliph of Allah will emerge; you must pledge fealty to him even if you have to crawl on ice to reach him because he is the Caliph of Allah. This Hadith has been reported by Hakim and Abu-Nu'aym.

From a perusal of these two Hadiths, some points emerge: first, that the mission is necessary and inevitable because the world will not come to an end

before the appearance of Mahdi. The world would perish only after the advent of Mahdi. The perishing of the world is linked to the advent of Mahdi. Secondly, the fight and bloodshed among the Caliphs is also necessary.

Thirdly, the term *kanz* (treasure) in the Hadith means the manifest Caliphate or despotic government like those that get established ordinarily. Prophet Muhammad has said : "Caliphate after me will last for thirty years; after that monarchy will be established with bitter antagonism and hostility. Each would oppose the other."

From the point of view of *Khilafat* and *Kanz*, the taking place of *qital* (Bloodshed) supports this meaning.

The question of manifest Cliphate for Imam Mahdi Mauood does not arise. The manifest Caliphate is related to Banu Ishaq (Children of Ishaq). The Mahdi Mauood, who is under discussion here, is from Bani Ismail (Children of Ishmael). He cam as a poor *faqir*. Praise be to Allah that Mahdi Mauood came in this way. The caliphate mentioned in the Hadith means the kingdom of Cairo and not the spiritual empire, attributed to prophets and messengers of Allah.

Fourthly, the coming of the people with black flags from Khorasan and Mahdi not being with them is proved by the Hadith. Then term *"sum"* or *"thum"* (u pronounced as in put) in the Arabic text indicates that the period of Mahdi Mauood comes (long) after that of the black flag people. The Haidth does not indicate anything other than this.

Fifthly, the Hadith clearly says that Imam Mahdi Mauood will come after all the disputes are settled. Therefore, to say that Imam Mahdi Mauood would come along with the people of the black flags militates against the phraseology of the Hadith. If, in spite of this, somebody insists that Imam Mahdi will appear along with the black flag people, he is obviously mistaken.

Sixthly, the Hadith proves that Imam Mahdi would be the Caliph of Allah. If somebody were to say that in all aspects Mahdi was the Caliph of Allah's Messenger, he is making a false statement because he is mixed up about the meaning of the Hadith.

DIVINE SECRETS

When Imam Mahdi came with his mission, the divine secrets, that had hitherto remained undisclosed, were revealed to the common people. He rearranged the commandments. The truth, however, is that the *Shar'iat* is the fountainhead of all commandments. But here, there is an element of force in the observance of the *Shar'iat* commandments — a force that was absent when it was applied to the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. For instance, Imam Mahdi enjoined upon his followers : "Strive with starvation and thirst (to the maximum) : may be you will see Allah face to face."

When the principles of *Shar'iat* and *Haqiqat* are at variance with each other, he invited the human beings in the idiom of *Haqiqat* (Divine reality) to the vision of Allah. Simultaneously, he followed the tenets of *Sahr'iat* very strictly. That way there are two aspects of Imam Mahdi's functions : he is the Caliph of Allah and the Caliph of Prophet Muhammad. He is the Caliph of Allah in his own right because he regularly invites people to observe the commandments relating to the *Haqiqat* (the divine reality) and since is a strict follower of the *Sahr'iat*, he is also the Caliph of Prophet Muhammad.

In his capacity as the Caliph of Allah, Imam Mahdi said the Quranic Verse : "The Lo., upon Us (resteth) the explanation thereof", (LXXVI : 19) meant that the explanation of Quran would come through Imam Mahdi, because, as he was the Caliph of Allah, he was the most perfect among the commentators of Quran, and hence, accepting his word as truth was obligatory because he is the Caliph of Allah.

A Caliph of Allah is imcapable and innocent of erring.

Prophet Muhammad has said : "Mahdi is from my descendants and will not err." In view of this evidence, which is proved beyond doubt, Imam Mahdi is innocent and there would be no error in his sayings. The contention of those who say that the Imam's commentary was in conformity with those of other commentators is not reliable.

I (the author) say that the word *"sum"* or *"thum"* in the original Quranic Verse indicates delay. (It means 'later'). Arabic grammarians also hold the same view. It is also not definite if the delay is short or long.

UNTENABLE ARGUMENT

However, the argument that delaying the explanation of Quran would prevent people from following it in practice on the ground that one cannot follow what has not been explained is untenable.

Our answer to this argument is that the Quranic Verses are of various kinds:

1. Verses relating to prayers and worshipping and other matters.
2. Verses relating to necessary beliefs without which Faith *(iman)* does not take roots in one heart (mind).
3. Verses relating to the stories of prophets which make the listeners believe.
4. Verses relating to divine knowledge (they have been worded in metaphors and similies and their real meaning cannot easily be comprehended by the idiom used in the verses.

The secrets in these four kinds of Quranic Verses were explained to the people during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad, the harbinger of *Sahr'iat*,

and the people of Arabia and elsewhere put them into practice.

But the fifth kind of Quranic Verses which were about divine realities *(Haqiqat)* and the nature and attributes of Allah, were not explained at the time for obvious reasons. For one thing, it was the initial period of the propagation of Islam and the people could not bear the brunt of the secrets of Divine Reality. It was also felt that any shortcoming in the performance of the injunctions might result in divine wrath. Hence, Prophet Muhammad did not explain these verses to the common people. This knowledge remained secret till the time of Imam Mahdi..... .

Hence Quran relating to matters of *Sahr'iat* had been explained and those relating to *Haqiqat* remained unexplained. No exception to this could be taken. Mualim-ut-Tanzil[42] says that some of the Quranic Verses were explained before they were revealed, some were explained during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad, some others would be explained during the later era and some would be explained on the Day of Judgement *(Qiamat).*

This shows that explaining of all the verses of the Quran was not necessary during the life of Prophet Muhammad.

Hence, the verse, "Then lo., upon Us (resteth) the explanation thereof" (LXXV : 19), signifies delay. It proves that some of the verses were explained during the life of Imam Mahdi. If, however, it is argued that the pronoun in the word *"bayanah"* in the verse refers to the whole of the Quran, it is to be noted that while the reference could be to the whole of the Book, it could also be for a part of the Book as is evident from the idiom used by the companions of Prophet Muhammad. They used to say : "Quran is revealed like this in respect of this precept." Hence the reference in this verse is not to the whole of the Quran, but to a part of the Quran, namely Verses relating to the knowledge about Divine Reality. This shows that the questions relating to *Haqiqat* was not publicly explained during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad. Its explanation was delayed.

The Book, Hayakil-un-Nur, was written by Shaikh Shihabuddin Maqtool, Al-Shiraqi, Al-Ilahi. In the commentary of this book, researcher Dawwani[43] also confirms that the word, *"sum"* or *"thum"* in the Verse means delay.

There is no ambiguity about the revelations about the Divine Truth, which will continue till the end of Time...... . Here, again delay is indicated, for this would be revealed during the life of Paraclete.[44]

VIRTUES OF IMAM MAHDI

The king of Khorasan Abul Ghazi Sultan Husain Mirza Hasani sent a delegation of eminent *ulema* (religious scholars) with some difficult and complicated questions. Mulla Ali Faiyaz was the leader of the delegation. The

other members were Mullah Ali Sherwani, Mullah Gul and Mullah Abdus Samad.

According to another version, the delegation included Mullah Durwesh and Mullah Abdus Samad.

On one occasion, Mullah Ali Faiyaz asked "What is the style of your explaining the Quran? Which (of the various Commentaries) conforms to your explaining? What is your point of view in commenting on Quran?"

Imam Mahdi replied that all the Commentaries of Quran are full of opinions and analogy. He said "I am the Caliph of Allah and I say what has been revealed to me by Allah through *ilham* (revelation). I explain the will of Allah and the *Shari'at* of Prophet Muhammad. Hence, the commentary which conforms with my own explanation is the explanation intended by Allah. All other explanations were to be rejected."

When the members of the delegation revisited the Imam. they were given religious instruction *(talqeen)*, which revealed to them the Divine Realities. The *ulema* brought good tidings to the Sultan.

They told the king that Imam Mahdi was patient, tolerant, considerate, strong and affable. He looked eminent among the brave, free and strong people. When some young people wanted to say something, they appeared to be confused. On the battlefield, it looked like death was dancing among the strong, hefty and powerful men and animals like elephants. The Imam, they said, was resigned to and trusting in Allah and his words and deeds were in strict conformity with *Shar'iat*. He invited people to Allah and was His Caliph in spreading His religion *(deen)*.

The Imam's words interpreted the will and mandate of Allah, they told the king. Everday Allah imparted new teachings to the Imam who was immersed in the manifestations of divine splendours and revelations. He never said anything that deviated from the injunctions of Quran. He taught *Shar'iat* and invited people to *Tariqat* and *Haqiqat*. His word and deed were in conformity with those of Prophet Muhammad.

Innumerable blood-thirty oppressors, mean, wealthy and other mortals had given up their sinful habits after remaining in his company for a couple of days and turned into paragons of virtue. Thieves and criminals joined him and turned into saints, they told the king. In short, they said, when one saw the Imam and his followers, one would spontaneously cry out that they are the angels of Heaven closest to Allah. They are always immersed in deep meditation and the vision of Allah. They seek nothing but the vision of Allah. They live in seclusion, contentment, abstinence, happiness even if afflicted with troubles. They live in strict conformity with *Shar'iat*. When the disciples of the Imam were such saintly people, it was realised that the Imam's claim to Mahdi-ship was true from every point of view.

Explaining all this, the *ulema* told the king that had Imam Mahdi appeared during the period when prophets came with divine missions and claimed that he was a Prophet, it would have been obligatory on his contemporaries to accept him as the Prophet. They said that the Imam's claim to be Mahdi appeared to them to be true in every respect.

Obviously, all these qualities would be found in a person who was sent by Allah with a divine mission, who is blessed with His help, victory, and miracles and who claims to be Imam Mahdi. When all this is obvious, any delay or hesistation in accepting him as Imam Mahdi has no justification whatsoever, the *ulema* told the king.

THE THREE CONDITIONS :

It is said that a Caliph of Allah should fulfil three conditions : (1) he should know things unknown to others, (2) perform miracles and (3) see angels face to face and listen to their words through revelation *(wahi).*

These three conditions are not needed to be fulfilled even by prophets. How could Imam Mahdi be expected to fulfil them?

At this stage I (the author Syed Ali) have to say that there are two kinds of unknown things *(mughibat)* : (1) those which some divines know and the common people do not, and (2) those which none other than Allah knows.

The first kind of the knowledge of the unknown is found among Prophets, and there is no change in its nature whether it is revealed directly or through the medium of an angel by Allah to the person concerned. The second is not found among the prophets except by revelation through angels *(wahi)*. In fact, this is the real knowledge of the unknown. Allah alone has that knowledge. Allah says : "None other than Allah knows."

Allah also says : "Verily the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). It is He Who sends rain and He Who knows that is in the wombs. Nor does anyone know what it is that he will earn on the morrow : nor does anyone know in what land he is to die. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted (with all things). (XXXI : 34).

This Quranic Verse explains that all things mentioned earlier are in the knowledge of Allah and none else knows them.

This was the reason why Prophet Muhammad did not reveal the time of the Doomsday *(Qiyamat)* when Gibriel asked him about it. This has been stated in the Hadith.

However, it is not difficult for Allah to reveal the knowledge of the unknown to any prophet. Allah says "........ But He choses of his epistles (for the purpose) whom He pleases .... " (III : 179).

In short, to acquire the knowledge of the unknown is not within the power of human beings; it is beyond them. However, their being known to the Caliphs of Allah is not conditional.

Now about miracles. A cause is inevitable for a miracle; without a cause a miracle never works. The cause for a miracle is possible, though not necessary.

And finally, the coming into view of angels is impossible without the fiat of Allah. A human being has no power to see angles.

Besides, revelation without the medium of angels is possible as is inspiration and instinct not amounting to sight.

Hence, the conditions which *ulema* (scholars) have mentioned are unreasonable. Their presence in Imam Mahdi are not necessary. However, Imam Mahdi possessed them and many others. The most important among them is Imam Mahdi's saying that he was taught by Allah without the medium of an angel. This attribute is predominant over all other attributes.

THE KING YEILDS

When King Husain Mirza's delegation returned and told him that its members were impressed by Imam Mahdi and had made fealty to him (the Imam), the king followed suit. The king was well versed in the scriptures, biographies and missions of earlier prophets. At the time he was afflicted with a deadly disease. He was weak and anaemic. Consequently, he wrote a letter to Imam Mahdi and sent it through his emissaries.

The letter, in translation, reads :

"In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

"From Husain, King of Herat[45] to the Imam who is the ruler of the time and true Caliph of Allah :

"I have made fealty to you and have joined your group like the people who join as learned and experienced people. I have reposed Faith in your being Imam Mahdi as people of intellegence have done.

"Hence, please favour me with your blessings as a leader of nation (qaum) does on his servants or a Prophet does to his flock *(ummah)*. I am ailing as if shackled by diseases. Had I been hale and hearty, I would have come in person to you. I would have remained in your august company. I would have washed your feet and swept your residence. This would have been the guarantee for the achievement of my objectives. It would have cured me of my illnesses. Please pray to Allah for my health, for the fulfilment of my desires, as your prayers will certainly be answered."

The Imam, on receiving the letter, prayed for the health and achievement of objectives of the king. He counted the king among his companions and migrants.

And then, the king started on his migratory journey to meet Imam Mahdi. But his health deteriorated. The journey, however, continued. On the

third day he breathed his last. Angels brought his mortal remains in front of Imam Mahdi, as they had brought, those of King Negus (Najashi of Abyssinia) before Prophet Muhammad : "To Allah we belong and to him is our return". (S.II : 156).

A MIRACLE

It is reported that eighty five of Imam Mahdi's *fuqara* died of hunger when his group was travelling in Sindh (now in Pakistan) and had fallen on hard times. They could not afford the wages for digging graves. Although they were starving, their hearts were full of (the virtue of) humility.

The *faqirs*, therefore, dug the graves in the soft soil of a cultivable field and buried the dead. When the owner of the field came to know of this, he complained to the authorities that his land was converted into a graveyard. An enquiry was ordered. The policemen asked the companions if the dead were buried there and if they were afraid of the Government no more.

The Imam calmly told the officials "Dig the graves and see for yourself what is light and what is darkness. If you find the dead bodies there, we are criminals and sinners; otherwise, you suffer shame and disgrace."

The graves were dug but no bodies were found. The officials rebuked the cultivator, who was himself aghast at what was seen. The officials appealed to the Imam for forgiveness.

The Imam then told his companions : "It is not my job to bury you. My business is to reach you to Allah through your own attributes *(sifat)*.

Whoever was fortunate to be in the Imam's company reached unprecendented spiritual heights. It was for this reason that the early preachers *(qudama)* had said that Imam Mahdi, in ordinary circumstances, was like his companions and he possessed the same attributes as those of his companions. For Allah says "As well as (to confer all these benefits upon) others of them who have not already joined them" (LXII : 3).

This is also the reason why Shaikh Akbar[46] has said in his book *Futuhat-e-Makkia* that the ministers (caliphs) of Imam Mahdi would be colleagues following in the footsteps *(hum-qadam)* of the companions of Prophet Muhammad. They fulfilled what they had promised. In short, innumberable people, impressed by the miracles of the Imam, joined him and his companions.

There were others who thought that the miracles were sorcery and witchcraft; they went astray. Their refusal is similar to that by ordinary people of Prophet and viceregents of Allah and their invitation to come to Allah, in the past.

TRUST IN ALLAH - 1

It is reported that when some of the companions asked the Imam what

should a man do if he was starving and on the verge of death, he said earning was good for him. But still better was total trust in Allah, for He says "And whosoever putteth his trust in Allah, He will suffice him". (LXV : 3).

Allah is sufficent for him. And that is why we preferred *Tawakkal* (trust) over earning and begging.

It may also be noted here, for the sake of argument, that when Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was thrown into fire, he did not like, and was not prepared, to receive any help from Jibrail (Jibril, Gabriel). This exalted degree of *Tawakkal* (Trust in Allah) is notable. Imam Ghazali[47] has, in his book *Ahya-ul-Uloom*, preferred this attitude and has explained it in detail.

In short, Imam Mahdi's companions were select, laudable and virtuous. They were endowed with excellence. They could also perform miracles.

Although they were in servere poverty, they lived with resignation and contentment and did not give up their exalted character and virtuous living. Among the ordinary larger groups of Muslims, there was hardly anybody who could come up to and who could put their trust in Allah and depend on Him for completing any work without seeking help from relations and friends.

They lived neither in cities nor other inhabited localities, but in forests and deserts. They desired neither luxuries nor tasty dishes. They prayed for neither splendour and glory for their leaders nor rank and dignity for their nobles and lords. They prayed for nearness to Allah and thus become exalted and distinguished. Thanks to Allah for blessing us with the knowledge, divine reality and reposing faith in Him.

It has been flawlessly proved that the Caliphs of Allah say nothing on their own. When they do, they speak in the language of divine revelations and inspirations and tell their followers what Allah reveals to them.

The revealed material is then disseminated by spoken and written word by ordinary groups among the people. The revealed *Sharia* is imposed on the people as *farz* and *wajib* (obligatory duties). This is the procedure adopted by all Caliphs of Allah who were made Prophets and sent to the people.

However, the Caliph who was made a *wali* (saint), and who is the seal of the Muhammadan Sainthood, would follow the *Sahar'iat* revealed by *wahi* (revelation through Archangel Gabriel) to Prophet Muhammad. This Caliph will not act in accordance with his own opinion, analogy or deduction but invites the people to true divine knowledge *(irfan)* and vision *(baseerat)*. Allah says "Tell (O, Muhammad) ... I and my follower invite unto Allah for his vision". (XII : 108).

Here the word "follower" is used for Mahdi-al-Mauood, as indicated by Mahdi and others before him.

In his book *Futuhat-e-Makkiah*, Shaikh Akbar has explained this in the tafsir of this Quranic Verse. He says Mahdi is he who follows Prophet

Muhammad. Prophet Muhammad has said Mahdi is from me (from my progeny); he will follow me and commit no mistakes.

Similarly, Imam Mahdi also claimed that he followed the *Shar'iat* as revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Archangel Gabriel.

In short, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad concluded during his own life; however, the teachings of beneficence *(ihsan)* and the related divine secrets, which are indicated in the Hadith, were not publicly taught by Prophet Muhammad. These had remained unexplained. Prophet Muhammad himself had left these secrets to be explained by Imam Mahdi. In other words, Prophet Muhammad had said that these secrets would be explained by Mahdi. Accordingly, Imam Mahdi revealed the divine secrets to the entire mankind.

GIVING UP WORLDLINESS

Imam Mahdi was the Caliph (viceregent) of Allah. Among the commandments he preached for the followers of Prophet Muhammad *(Ummat-e-Muhammadia)* is *tark-e-dunya* (giving up worldliness). To give up relationship with the creatures of Allah too is obligatory. Allah has said "Devote thyself to Him whole-heartedly". (LXXIII : 8). "(Abdul Majid Daryabadi explains "Forsake every other thing and apply oneself to the service of Allah.)"

Imam Razi says *tabattal* means to give up the world or whatever there is in it. The reason is that a person who is busy or engaged in things other than Allah cannot whole-heartedly devote himself to Allah. This shows that *tabattal* or retiring from the world and devoting oneself to Allah is obligatory *(wajib)*.

It should be remembered here that where the verb is in imperative mood (in Quran) without qualifications, it mean it is *wajib* or *farz* (obligatory). The Imam's of Principles of Arabic Grammer have proved this. Hence *tabattal* and *tark-e-dunya* (giving up worldliness) is obligatory.

Allah says : "Whoso desireth the life of the world and its pomp, We shall repay them their deeds Herein and Therien they will not be wronged. Those are they for whom is naught in the Hereafter save the Fire." (XI : 15-16). The Arbic word *"man"* (a pronounced as U in *pun, fun*) meaning "who" applies both to Muslims and non-Muslims. Hence, the Verse is applicable to the person who bears the qualifies described in it, irrespective or whether they occur in a faithful or an infidel.

Again Allah says: "Then, as for him who rebelled. And choose the life of the world. Lo; hell will be his home." (LXXIX : 37-38-39). In his *Tafseer* (commentary), Imam Razi relies on the tradition of Prophet Muhammad which says that the love for the world is the fountainhead for all sins. Hence, the two attributes of rebelling and choosing the world guide a man to the height of depravity; he becomes an infidel and qualifies for eternal torture. The basis for the attribute is that a person who has not indulged in wickedness and bad habits

will not be admitted to Hell. Since this is the result of the love for the world (or earthly pleasures), Imam Mahdi made it obligatory on his followers to give up worldliness, lest they fall into Hell.

SOLITUDE

Among the commandments which Imam Mahdi made obligatory on his followers is seclusion, solitude or staying away from the people. Allah has said : "...... devote thyself to Him whole-heartedly." (LXXIII : 8). This means that one should break away from everything worldly and entirely devote oneself to Allah. Further, Allah says : "And forsake those who take their religion for a pastime and jest, and whom the life of the world beguileth." (VI : 70). The verse calls upon (the followers) to give up the company of "those people" because they made fun (of the religion). The verse makes it obligatory upon the followers to stay away from people who made fun of the religion. However, it is not necessary that one should ostracize himself from people who did not indulge in rediculing the religion.

PERPETUAL REMEMBRANCE

Imam Mahdi also made perpetual remembrance *(zikr-e-dawam)* of Allah obligatory on his followers, for Allah says : "When ye have performed the act of worship, remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining." (IV : 103).

Imam Razi quoted Hazrat Ibn-Abbas as saying : "Remember Allah day and night, on land and sea, in station or in journey, in health and sickness, in public or in private. In his *Taf'seer* of the Quranic Verse : "Remembrance of Allah is the highest." (XXIX : 45); he says that two points are to be noted here: First, that Allah remembers you and His remembring you is of a higher degree than your remembering Him; and secondly, remembrance of Allah is the most exalted among all other prayers.

Further Allah says : "And do thou (O reader) bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility and in reverence. Without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings, and be not thou of those who are unheedful." (VII : 205).

In his *taf'seer*, Imam Razi says that "there are no limited timings for the remembrance of Allah, it is obligatory at all times. Remembering Allah in heart (Qalb in Arbic also means medulla, a part of the brain) must be continuous and perpetual. One should not be neglectful of Allah even for a moment.

Allah says : "O ye who believe, celebrate the praises of Allah, and do this often." (XXXIII : 41). In his *taf'seer, Mua'lim-ut-Tanzeel*, Abu Muhammad Al-Husain Bin Masoud says that Allah has set a limit on all obigations He has imposed on the people and there is no obligation without a limit. An obligation is waived under certain circumstances when a person is not capable of performing it. But there is no limit for remembrance *(zikr)* and under no circumstances, one is

allowed to breathe without remembrance. The solitary exception is a lunatic.

TRUST IN ALLAH - II

Another of the obligations, enjoined by Imam Mahdi is trust in Allah *(tawakkal)* and giving up of efforts (to earn).

Hence, whoever put his trust in Allah for all his work and took to the life of passivity (as practised by ascetics and mystics) asking, begging, visiting the houses of the worldly and wealthy people, earning and striving to earn a livelihood are taboo for him; for these things are not commendable. Attentions and hopitality to wealthy neighbours should be abandoned because they defeat the very purpose of trust in Allah.

When hospitality of the wealthy people continues, the wealthy people would try to reciprocate one way or the other. This would be tantamount to gaining from trade—some sort of a give and take. It is, therefore not proper for those trusting in Allah to put their trust also in others.

When once one puts his trust in Allah, one should entrust everything to His custody; for Allah is sufficient for him. Allah says "And if anyone puts his trust in Allah, sufficient is (Allah) for him." (LXV : 3). This verse is clear and definite in its meaning and it states clearly what is right and what is wrong.

The point to be noted in this verse is that Allah has promised sufficiency and security. It is, therefore, necessary for the people to have faith in the veracity and the fulfilment of the promise. What is concealed in destiny and divine knowledge would certainly come to happen. But one has to trust and have faith in Allah because He has clearly explained that He keeps His word. Hence, it becomes necessary for the *momin* (faithful) to repose trust in Allah. Otherwise, it would be tantamount to decrying Allah's promise as false by implication, and this is kufr (not believing in Allah).

An objection can be raised that the divine commandment, "whoso-ever putteth his trust in Allah, He will suffice him", (LXV : 3) proves that one should not indulge in earning to remove poverty and need, and is opposed to another divine commandment, which says "And when the prayer is finished, then may ye disperse through the land, and seek of the Bounty of Allah." (LXII : 10). The latter verse shows the need for earning to remove poverty. Obviously there appears contradiction between the two Quranic Verses. How can the two verses be reconciled?

Our argument in this case is that the first verse proves that if a person trusted in Allah and entrusted all his affairs to Allah. Allah is enough for him. It is necessary to believe that Allah will keep his word. But if a person does not repose full faith in Allah, he is permitted to seek the blessings of Allah and try to complete his tasks. This shows that the two verses do not contradict each other.

COMPANY OF THE TRUTHFUL

Among the commandments of Imam Mahdi, is the obligation of the company of the truthful/righteous.

Allah says "...... Be with those who are true." (IX : 119). The verb in this verse is in imperative mood and is an unequivocal command. The verse means that the company of the truthful and virtuous is obligatory *(wajib)* for the practice of piety so that *taqwa* (fear of Allah, piety) gets deeply entrenched in one's heart. Even *taqwa* becomes inconceivable without the company of the truthful.

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

Another of the commandments of Imam Mahdi relates to the distribution of wealth. Allah says "O ye who believe; spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you .... ". (II : 254).

Allah further says "And, for the love of Allah, they feed the indigent, the orphan, and the captive."

It is obligatory on the person who spends in the way of Allah to give the thing he likes most. Otherwise, what he gives would go rewardless. Allah says "By no means shall ye attain righteousness unless ye give (freely) of that which ye love ..... ." (III : 92). This shows that divine award is contingent upon your giving in the way of Allah the best and most loved thing (in charity).

DESIRE OF ALLAH'S VISION

Another of the commandments of Imam Mahdi is the desire of Allah's vision. Allah says ".... Whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner." (XVIII : 110). Whoever hopes to meet Allah should work according to His dictates and he should not include others in his worship of Allah and His attributes (i.e., should not believe in and practise polytheism).

It may be pointed out here that Allah's vision in this world (Here) is possible, according to the belief of Ahel-e-Sunnat (the followers of the Sunni Muslim sect). The explanation for this is that when Prophet Moses heard the word of Allah and enjoyed it, he developed a desire to see Him. He, therefore, prayed to Allah saying, "Lord show thyself to me that I may look at Thee (VII : 143).

No doubt, if the vision of Allah were impossible, Prophet Moses would never have made the request. Since he made it, the vision of Allah is proved to be possible and permitted in this world (Here).

Secondly, Allah's reply to Prophet Moses also shows that the vision of Allah is possible and permitted. For Allah his associated His being viewed with the stability of the mountain. In other words, He made His being viewed contingent on the mountain remaining stationary. "Thou will not see me, but gaze upon the mountain; If it stands still in its place, then you will see me." (VII : 143)

If the mountain remaining in its place is possible, anything contingent upon it should also be possible. All this goes to show the vision of Allah in this world (Here) is possible...... .

In his book, *Futuhat-e-Makkiah*, Shaikh Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi says that a thing that can happen in a dream or in the Hereafter, can happen in this world also. In short the vision of Allah is possible in this world. This is the reason why a large number of *ulema* (Muslim scholars) believe that Prophet Muhammad viewed Allah through physical eyes.

OPPOSITION OF IMAM MAHDI

When people found Imam Mahdi's commadments, described above, to be difficult to follow, they repudiated, abused, avoided and failed to repose faith in him.

Imam Mahdi was externed from wherever he went. "To Allah we belong, and to Him is our return." (II : 156). But he went on demonstrating the Truth. Often people did not lend an ear to him. But his invitation to the path of Allah continued unabated. He never bothered whether the crowds in his congregations were large or small.

Let not the readers be under the impression that the matters, Imam Mahdi designated as obligatory *(farz)*, have now been repealed. We (the author) hold that they have never been repealed. For, *naskh* (repeal) means that one Shara'i argument is superceded by a later *Shara'i* argument which contradicts the former. The commandments given by Imam Mahdi are not of this nature, for the simple reason that the "Later *Shara'i* argurment" does not exist.

A case in point is that of gargling and taking water into the nose to clean it during *wazu* (ablutions) before prayers. Some of the *fuqaha* (Muslim legists) hold both as *sunna* (Prophet's tradition) and some others have treated them as *farz*; yet others have held that gargling is *sunna* and taking water into the nose is *farz*. There are similar other issues. Correct performance of all postures in prayer is *farz* and *wajib*, according to Imam Shafei. These commandments were *mustahab* (desirable), according to the Imams of the other schools of Islamic *fiqh`* (Islamic Jurisprudence). Imam Mahdi made them *farz* (obligatory). That the commandments of Imam Mahdi are better than those of the four Imams of *fiqh* is beyond a shadow of doubt. For, the commandments of the four Imams are based on presumption and analogy and are not faultless.

The commandments of Imam Mahdi are different because he is the Caliph of Allah and the basis of his divine office is that he is faultless. Hence, his commandments are pure, true and real faith *(iman)*.

Shaikh Akbar Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi has said in his book *Futuhat-e-Makkiah*, that Imam Mahdi would order what is revealed to him by Allah through an angel so that it is based on correct foundations. This is what we call *Shara-e-Hanafi-Muhammadi*.

Had Prophet Muhammad been alive and the *Shar'iat* been withdrawn, he would have ordered what Imam Mahdi did. The reason is that Imam Mahdi is prohibited from using analogy and presumption because the texts are revealed by Allah to the Imam. It is because of this that Prophet Muhammad has said of Imam Mahdi that "he would follow in my footsteps faultlessly." This shows that Imam Mahdi is the follower of *Shar'iat* and not a law-giver *(Sahib-e-Shar'iat)*.

ZIKR AS OBLIGATION

In short a commandment of Imam Mahdi is like the commandment of Prophet Muhammad. The Imam's making remembrance *(zikr)* an obligation *(farz)* does not repeal or overrule earlier commandments of *Shar'iat*.

If the above discussion gives rise to an argument that had the Imam's commandments been the commandments of *Shar'iat*, why were they not revealed earlier and that no companion of Prophet Muhammad had reported them. This being the situation, the commandments (of Imam Mahdi). are not reliable, it is argued.

Our reply to this argument is that some of the commandments, which gained importance under specific principles, Quranic texts and well-known traditions of Prophet Muhammad, were not commonly known in the first century of Islam (for instance, gargling and taking water in the nose in the course of *wazu*). These two acts are *farz* according to some *fuqaha* (legists). But these were not treated as *farz* during the life of the companions of Prophet Muhammad. The reason is that making these two acts obligatory was based on Arabic lexicography, grammer and literature and grammer was not in vogue in times of the Prophet's companions ....

In short, remembrance *(zikr)* also is basic, which is proved by Quranic Verses, Prophet's traditions and the opinions of the *mujtahideen* (religious directors). However, making *zikr* obligatory was proved by the commandment of Imam Mahdi. It is immaterial if it was not in common knowledge during the early period of Islam. Besides, the absence of a commandment in the common and open knowledge of the people does not prove that the commandment was never issued.

TEACHING OF BENEFICENCE

Religion consists of the three components : submission *(Islam)*, faith *(iman)* and beneficence *(ihsan)*. The first two are related to Prophethood. And Prophet Muhammad preached them to the people. The third, beneficence *(ihsan)* was not related to *nabuwwat* (Prophethood). Besides, it demanded exertion and hardship. Hence Prophet Muhammad gave out this information as an indirect discourse to his companions because it was necessary for him to do so. Dissiminating information thus does not create an obligation. Prophet Muhammad delegated the responsibility of preaching beneficence

to the *Khatim-e-Vilaya-e-Muhammadi* (the seal of the Muhammadan Sainthood). He also gave some clues about the person who would be assigned the task by Allah. He indicated the Quranic verses and some clues leading to the identification of the Mahdi. He also asked his followers to follow Imam Mahdi, even if they were compelled to crawl on ice to reach him.

Hence the commandments relating to beneficence were not revealed to the common people during the period of Prophet Muhammad's companions and their successors. The *mujtahideen* too did not concentrate on drawing out the issues from Quranic verses and traditions of the Prophet. Hence, it is very necessary to explain that these commandments are the commandments of *tareeqat* (the ways of the *sufis*). These are also the real issues of Shar'iat for which Imam Mahdi was sent on the divine mission.

Here the relationship between *Shar'iat* (canonical laws of the Islam) and *Haqiqat* (Ultimate Reality) has become obvious. It means that *Shar'iat* is common and Haqiqat is special, and that the commandments of *Haqiqat* are true to the meaning of *Shar'iat*. Knowledge of causes is required in two ways : by listening and by information. But is it necessary that every listener should fully know the idiom and style of speech (to understand the real meaning)? It is, therefore, possible that careless conveyors of the message might err in passing on the correct message to others.

It is for this reason that Imam Mahdi has said : "Any saying attributed to me is mine if it is in accordance with Quran; otherwise, treat it as not from me. It could become incorrect through faulty reporting. "This shows that if the reporting of an incident is doubtful or does not conform to the norms described, it is not obligatory as a belief. Anybody who does not abide by the rule is unwise. It has been explained earlier that Imam Mahdi was the perfect follower of the *Shar'iat* of Prophet Muhammad and in this capacity, he is the Caliph of the Prophet, as stated by Qazi Muntajibuddin in his book *Makhzan-ud-Dala'il*.

This was why Imam Mahdi did not explain *Shar'iat* as *dawat* (invitation). He has clearly stated that the *mujtahideen* had drawn out the *Shar'iat* issues through the correctness of their opinion. Hence, he asked his followers to turn to the opinions and *fatwas* of the *mujtahideen*. He forbade his followers from asking him about the *Shar'iat* commandments because, as he said, he had been sent on the divine mission to spread the teachings and the hidden divine secrets of *vilayat* (Muhammadan sainthood), and that they need not turn to the works of the *mujtahideen* for these secrets. Imam Mahdi would dissiminate the teachings of *vilayat* because he is the Caliph of Allah, as stated earlier. This is the basic proof of his Mahdi-ship. And if Imam Mahdi is treated as the Caliph of Allah in the matter of *Shar'iat*, the question of repeal and rejection of earlier commandments of *Shar'iat* will rise. When the issue of *naskh* (repeal and rejection) raises its head, people will refuse to accept his claim to Mahdi-ship. Besides, Imam Mahdi was not called upon

to lay a claim to this. Hence, this is true and all else is wrong.

It has been reported that Imam Mahdi used to repeatedly say that "the commandments of Allah that I bring to you are faith and religion *(deen)* and, although *Saiyyadain* (Mahmood and Khundmir) will not falter in the observance of the commandments of *vilayat*, the proof of *deen* does not lie on their shoulders."

Imam Mahdi is the Caliph of Allah for the reason that he spreads the teachings of Allah, as taught to him by Allah. He preached what Allah directed him to preach. Hence, one has to follow Imam Mahdi alone. It is not obligatory on Imam Mahdi's followers to follow anybody other than the Imam himself.

A question cannot be raised at this stage that when following Imam Mahdi alone is obligatory because he is incapable of committing mistakes *(Masoom-an-il-Khata)*, following his companions and their successors is neither permitted nor obligatory. However, it must be stated that following his companions and their successors is absolutedly necessary only as long at they do not violate the word and deed of Imam Mahdi. Any saying of the Imam's companions which violates the word and deed of Imam Mahdi is liable to be abandoned. Imam Mahdi has set his own self as an example for following in the matters of *deen*. Ths *Saiyyadain* are no doubt sheltered from mistakes. But there is a difference between being incapable of and sheltered from mistakes *(khata)*.

There is no need of interpreting or re-interpreting the commandments of Imam Mahdi because he has not left any commandment abridged, brief, ambiguous and incomplete. He has clearly explained, as they should have been explained, all matters pertaining to the desire for Allah *(talab-e-khuda)*. As such there remains no need for analogy and interpretation in respect of commandments relating to *vilayat*. When there are controversies, the need for analogy arises. But in *vilayat*, all members of the ummah are united in their opinions about the basics. On the question of desire for Allah and struggle for Him, all are unanimous.

But in the case of *Shar'iat*, the situation is different. Quran and Hadith (traditions) meet all our needs, but every person cannot understand their nuances. Besides, we have our social needs, human imperatives, monetary and other transactions. Hence, it was necessary of Islamic jurists to use analogy and interpretation to arrive at conclusions.

Following the religious directos and jurists *(mujtahids)* is necessary because Imam Mahdi has asked his followers to turn to them for solving issues of *Shar'iat*. The situation now is that following the *mujtahideen* in *Shar'iat* is inevitable. But so far as the commandments of *vilayat* are concerned, the following of the mujtahideen would be unlawful *(na-jaiz)*. This discussino leads to the conclusion that religion is of two kinds : beliefs and practice.

The beliefs at the stage of Prophethood would emerge from Quran, traditions of Prophet Muhammad, consensus of eminent religious leaders *(ijma)*

and all that Prophet Muhammad has decreed to be part of the religion *(deen)*. But at the stage of *vilayat* (sainthood), beliefs would mean all that has been described (as at the stage of Prophethood) and the sayings of Imam Mahdi which were in practice during the period of the companions of Imam Mahdi and their successors. This means that the sayings of Imam Mahdi which were not known and in vogue during the period of the Imam's companions and their successors would not become beliefs. The consensus of the successors of the companions of the Imam would be valid only if it is in consonance with the consensus of the companions.

The practice at the stage of Prophethood is based on the principles described above, traditions of the Prophet and analogy, and at the stage of *vilayat*, they are based on the above principles and traditions of Imam Mahdi, which are authentically reported. Besides, following in the footsteps of the companions of the Imam, would mean those of the companions who had been named by the Imam. One of the companions who should be followed as explained by the Imam is Maulana Syed Mahmood. Imam Mahdi said "Companionship with me is like an oven where some of the coals are fully afire, while others have just caught fire. But when they appear before Syed Mahmood, they will also be fully aflame."

This shows that following the companions who have not been named by the Imam Mahdi is not obligatory. Their practice should be tested on the touchstone of the principles described above. If they pass the test they should be followed; otherwise, not.

It is obvious to the discerning that if a commandment based on a tradition or analogy goes against the saying of Imam Mahdi, the saying of the Imam alone is bound to be followed for the simple reason that the Imam is incapable of committing a mistake *(masoom-an-il-khata)* and, therefore, there is no possibility of a mistake occuring in his sayings ....

MAHADVI BELIEFS

I now describe the Mahdavi beliefs :

We (Mahdavis) say that Allah is one and is free from needs. He has said "Say : He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute." (CXII : 1-2).

Allah is alive eternally, nobody is like Him. He says "Allah, There is no god but He — the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal." (II : 255).

Allah knows all things : He says " ...... From whom is not hidden the least little atom in the Heavens or on earth ...." (XXXIV : 3).

Allah possesses the divine power, omnipotence : He says "..... Allah hath power over all things." (II : 20).

Allah sees and hears : He says "........ He is the One who heareth and seeth (all things)." (XVII : 1).

Allah speaks : He says "And to Moses Allah spoke direct." (IV : 164).

Allah is eternal, immortal, ancient: He says "He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent; and he has full knowledge of all things." (LVII: 3).

Allah is the Creator: He says "that is Allah, your Lord, there is no God but He, the Creator of all things; then worship ye Him; and He hath power to dispose of all affairs." (VI : 102).

Allah is provider: He says "There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah." (XI : 6).

Allah warns: "And who gives you sustenance from heaven and earth? (Can there be another) God besides Allah? Say, "Bring forth your argument, if ye are telling the truth." (XXVII 64).

Allah gives life and death: He says "To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; it is He Who gives Life and Death; and He has Power over all things." (LXII : 2).

Allah is the Subduer, Almighty, for He says: "He is Allah, the One, the Irresistible." (XXXIX : 4).

Allah can be seen: His being seen is possible; He says: "But those who were blind in this world will be blind-in-the-Hereafter...... " (XVII : 72).

Further Allah says: "Some faces, that day, will beam (in brightness and beauty) — Looking towards their Lord." (LXXV : 22-23).

Allah also says: "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision." (VI : 103). In this verse, Allah has said that His nature *(zath)* cannot be comprehended. He has not said that he cannot be seen. The word *"idrak"* does not mean seeing; it means comprehension, understanding.

Allah has no match *(hamsar)* and no partner *(shareek)*: He says: "And there is none like Him." (CXII : 4).

Further, He says: "Glory to Allah (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him." (LIX : 23).

Allah has no limits *(hadd)* because limits begin after comprehension and any effort to comprehend the essence and nature *(zath)* of Allah is prohibited.

Allah is not bound by time and space, He is the Creator of time and space. He says "Your Guardian-Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority). (VII: 54). In other words, the essence and nature (zath) of Allah is that which created heavens and earth and reaching the Throne *(arsh)*, recited: "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah." (VI : 79).

Allah further said: "It is He who created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions); the day He saith, 'Be', behold; it is." (VI : 73).

Allah is the Master and there is no other master, for Allah says "Is not Allah the most Conclusive of all judges?" (XCV : 8).

To comprehend the essence and nature *(zath)* of Allah is not possible, for He says "No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision; He is above all comprehension, yet acquainted with all things." (VI : 103).

Quran is the word of Allah and not created *(ghair-makhluq)*. When Allah Himself is eternal, his word too is eternal. The new Mu'tazila[48] thinking which treats Quran as 'created' *(haadith)* is an absolute innovation *(bidat)*.

Allah alone guides to the right path and He alone misleads, for Allah says "....... Allah leaves to stray whom He wills, and guides who He wills...... ." (XXXV : 8).

It is not the will of Allah that all creation should repose Faith *(iman)*: He says "If it had been thy Lord's will, they would all have believed — all who are on earth." (X : 99). Since it was not His will, all people did not believe.

Human beings are not the creators of their labour, industry and activity. Allah says : "...... He, the Creator of all things, then worship ye Him." (VI : 102). People benefit from this act of creation by Allah. The Mu'tazila thinking in this respect deceives immature minds.

Allah is pleased with Faith *(iman)*. How could He be pleased with infidelity? He says "But He liketh not ingratitude from His servants...... ." (XXXIX : 7).

Allah places a burden on His servants only to the extent of their endurance. He says "On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater tha it can bear." (II : 286).

To improve and decorate is not obligatory on Allah; for He says : "Gracious is Allah to His servants ...." (XLII : 19).

Verily the punishment of the grave is for the infidels : Allah says "In front of the Fire will they be brought, morning and evening; and (the sentence will be) on the Day that Judgement will be established, Cast ye the People of Pharoah into the severest Penalty." (XL : 46).

The blowing of the Doomsday Trumpet is true. Allah has said : "Then, when one blast is sounded on the Trumpet, and the earth is moved, and its mountains, and they are crushed to powder at one stroke, — On that day shall the (Great) event come to pass. And the sky will be rent asunder, for it will, that Day be flimsy." (LXIX : 13-14-15-16).

Resurrection or the rising of the dead before the Judgement Day is inevitable : Allah says : "The Day whereon they will issue from their sepulchres in sudden haste as if they were rushing to a goalpost (fixed for them) — Their eyes lowered in dejection — ignominy covering them (All over). Such is the Day

which they are promised." (LXX : 43). Allah says "But verily over you (are appointed angels) to protect you — kind and honourable, — writing down (your deeds) : They know (and understand) all that ye do." (LXXXII : 10-11-12).

The character roll *(A'mal-nama)* being given in the hands (on the Day of Judgement) is true and inevitable, Allah says "Then he who is given his Record in his right hand, Soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning." (LXXXIV : 7-8).

In another place, Allah says "But he who is given his Record behind his back, Soon will he cry for perdition." (LXXXIV : 10-11).

And the questioning is inevitable : Allah says : "Soon will his account be taken by an easy reckoning." (LXXXIV : 8). Further Allah says : "It leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof." (XVIII : 49).

Further Allah says : "And those who are blessed shall be in the Garden; they will dwell therein for all the time that the heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord willeth, a gift without break." (XI : 108).

And Allah also says : "The righteous (will be) amid Gardens and fountains (of clear-flowing water). (Their greeting will be); Enter ye here in Peace and Security." (XV : 45-46).

The existence of Hell is true and inevitable. In this connection, Allah says : "Those who are wretched shall be in the Fire : there will be for them therein (nothing but) the heaving of sighs and sobs. They will dwell therein for all the time that heavens and the earth endure, except as thy Lord willeth : for thy Lord is the (sure) Accomplisher of what He Planneth." (XI : 106-107). Further Allah says : "And verily, Hell is the promised abode for them all to it are seven Gates: for each of those Gates is a (special) class (of sinners) assigned." (XV : 43-44).

Sirat (path) is also inevitable, Allah says "Not one of you but will pass over it." (XIX : 17).

Meezan (Balance to weight good and bad deeds on Judgement Day) is also inevitable : Allah says : "We shall set up scales of Justice ...." (XXI : 47).

And the existence of Kauther (a fountain or stream in Paradise) is also true : Allah says : "To thee We have granted the Fount (of abundance)." (CVIII : 1).

Grave sins *(Gunah Kabira)* do not deprive a man of his Faith *(iman)*. Allah says : "O ye who believe the law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder ...." (II : 178). Further Allah says : "O ye who believe, turn to Allah with sincere repentance ...." (LXVI : 8).

Allah does not pardon idolatory : He says : "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; but He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth...... ." (IV : 48).

That one is punished is also true : Allah says "It (Quran) leaves out nothing small or great, but takes account thereof." (XVIII : 49).

Allah forgives grave sins if the sinner does not consider it to be lawful: He says : "Allah forgiveth not that partners should be set up with Him; But He forgiveth anything else, to whom He pleaseth." (IV : 48).

Quran does not say that sinners will enter Hell, but it says that he would be thrown into Fire. The term Fire is not associated with Hell alone; it could be the fire of the grave. In Verse 46 of *Sura* XL *(Mu-min)*, the term Fire is taken to mean the Fire of the grave. The word Fire is anologous. Hence, the argument of a sinner being thrown into the Hell becomes weak. Hence, it becomes a conjecture, which is not a matter of faith or belief.

Allah's promise is true, for He says "...... Allah never fails in His promise." (III : 9).

Allah has created angels : He has said : "...... Allah .... who made the angels messengers with wings — two or three or four (pairs)..... ." (XXXV : 1).

Faith *(iman)* increases and decreases : Allah says : "...... they may add Faith to their Faith...... ." (XLVIII : 4).

Allah chooses from among men a prophet to guide them. He says: "Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed...... ." (II : 213).

It is apparent that the first among the Prophets was Adam and the last Muhammad : Allah says : "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels; I will create a viceregent on earth." (II : 30).

Further He said : "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets..... ." (XXXIII : 40).

Obedience to Prophets and Caliphs (viceregents) of Allah is obligatory : Allah says : "O ye who believe : obey Allah and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you." (IV : 59).

Muhammad is the best among the Prophets : Allah says : "ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah..... ." (III : 110).

And Allah said : "And raised high the esteem (in which) thou (art) held." (XCIV : 4).

Muhammad made the midnight journey to seven heavens : Allah says "Glory to Allah who did take His Servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.... ." (XVII : 1).

He has also said "Will ye then dispute with him concerning what he

saw? For indeed he saw him at a second descent, Near the Lote tree beyond which none may pass; Near it is the Garden of Abode." (LIII : 12-13-14-15).

Allah sent book to Prophets : He says "..... We have sent down to thee the Book explaining all things..... ." (XVI : 89).

Miracles are also true. Many Quranic verses prove it.

Prophet Muhammad's successors are the four Caliphs. The first among them is Abu Bakr, the second Omar, the third Osman and the fourth Ali. Abu Bakr is the best *(afzal)*. The Shia concept is not free of innovations.

Caliphate subsisted for thirty years. After that lordship and monarchy took its place. Besides, these people mentioned above were not free of mistakes *(M'asoom-an-il-khata)*. Except Imam Mahdi, all the descendants of Fatima (daughter of Prophet Muhammad) are not innocent. It is not necessary for an Imam to be the best *(afzal)* among his contemporaries (except for Imam Mahdi, who is innocent).

The companions of Prophet Muhammad should always be mentioned with respect and should be respectfully talked about. Yazid is undoubtedly a sinner.

Persons whom Prophet Muhammad gave the glad tidings of an abode in Paradise, are truly the people of the Paradise.

We also believe that Imam Mahdi, who is one of the Caliphs (Viceregents) of Allah, came and went away (died). He was a servant of Allah and a follower of the *Shar'iat* of Prophet Muhammad. He was not a *mujtahid* (religious director). He was directly taught by Allah. He is innocent *(m'asoom-an-il-khata)* — free of mistakes. He claimed to be Mahdi Mau'ood (the Promised Mahdi) after Allah commanded him to do so. Following him is obligatory. The reason is that he is a Caliph of Allah. Any Hadith that contradicts the word of Imam Mahdi, is void. In the light of the sayings of *mujtahideen*, he is *ghair-muqallid* (one who does not follow the Imams of the Four Schools of Fiqh). He is the seal of the *Vilayat-e-Muhammadia* (Muhammadan Sainthood) and the exponent of the secrets of the Muhammadan Reality *(Israr-e-Haqiqat-e-Muhammadia)*. This in fact is his mission. He is the follower of the laws of *Shar'iat* of Prophet Muhammad. Under his orders, the desire to see Allah is obligatory and a person who is desirous of seeing Allah is the (true) believer *(momin)*.

To be cut off from the world, companionship of the truthful and seclusion, and all matters, discussed in the foregoing pages, are obligatory in the light of the commandments of Imam Mahdi.

To say one's prayers under the leadership *(imamat)* of a person who has not reposed faith in Syed Muhammad being the Imam Mahdi is not permitted.

In his character, Imam Mahdi is equal to Prophet Muhammad, except for Prophethood *(nubuwwat)* and messenger-ship *(risalat)*. Imam Mahdi was not a Prophet *(Nabi)* or Messenger *(rasul)* of Allah. Both Prophethood and Messengership ended with Prophet Muhammad. As the viceregent of Allah, Iman Mahdi is better *(afzal)* than Abu Bakr Siddiq, the first Caliph of Prophet Muhammad.

If a tradition of the Prophet is in consonance with the word and deed of Imam Mahdi, it is correct. Otherwise, it is liable to be rejected. Imam Mahdi is innocent *(Ma'soom)* because he is a viceregent of Allah. Imam Mahdi's word and deed are not superceded on being contrary to the traditions of the Prophet. (All these details have been given in *Aqida Sharifa)*.

Imam Mahdi's Caliphs are five in number. They are Syed Mahmood Sani-e-Mahdi, Syed Khundmir Siddiq-e-Vilayat, Shah Ne'mat, Shah Nizam and Shah Dilawar, in that order.

We believe that only those who have been given the glad tidings *(bisharat)* by Imam Mahdi, get an abode in Paradise.

If one fails to recite the opening *Sura, Fatihah*, of Quran in his prayers, the prayer is not correct even if one is saying his prayers under the leadership of an *imam*.

One should not raise his hands after the obligatory prayers *(farz namaz)* in seekng blessings, (because this deed is not correct). There is no commandment to raise one's hands in this way in the traditions of the Prophet.

It has now been proved that Prophet Muhammad had recited *Allahumma antas salam* after prayers and, some times, *takbir* (magnification). But he has sought no blessings for himself.

Seeking blessings (of Allah) and charity *(sadaqa)* are profitable and may postpone death. No person will be made to carry sombody else's burden; in other words, one will not be punished for someone else's sins.

Accepting soothsayer's prophecies as correct is *kufr* (blasphemy).

To treat what has been prohibited by Allah as permitted is also *kufr*.

Rejecting clear commandments based on traditions of Prophet Muhammad is also kufr. May Allah protect (us).

To use abusive language against the Caliphs of Allah is also kufr.

One should have full faith in all prophecies made by Prophet Muhammad, for instance, {the coming of Jesus, Messiah and antichrist imposter (Dajjal)}. Any difference of opinion in the coming true of these prophecies is speculative. Otherwise, they would be tantamount to repealing the traditions of the Prophet. Issues {settled by consensus *(ijma)* and traditions} are to be treated as belief and it is necessary to have faith in them.

These are our (the Mahdavia) beliefs and it is obvious that they are all in consonance with Quran and the traditions of the Prophet. And when the situation is this, any opposition to us is not correct or healthy. If one looks at our message carefully, there is no scope for turning away from us.

How can a person who is endowed with qualities described above slander Allah and falsely claim : "I am Mahdi Al-Mau'ood and Caliph of Allah." Such a claim wound be fraught with all kinds of difficulties. How can one bear all the hardships without help from Allah?

Another point to be noted is that if a person takes advantage of the contradictions among the traditions about the coming of Imam Mahdi and argues on the ground of the contradications, he is dishonest.

The greatest peculiarity of the identity of Imam Mahdi is that he would be animmeculate and of spotlessly clean character. All these points have been discussed at length by experts in the science of argument *(ilm-e-kalam)*. They are the same qualities which Prophets were endowed with. Imam Mahdi too was endowed with qualities, which Prophets possessed.

Imam Mahdi was the truthful healer of spiritual maladies. His companionship turned coward into the courageous, dumb became orators, fools became wise, the meek became bountiful, the low became high, sinners became saints, misers became generous...... .

LIES NAILED

We will now venture to nail some of the lies that are in currency. When divine feelings and manifestations dominated Imam Mahdi's mental processes, he gave up food and beverages for twelve years. In this period, he is said to have consumed about seventeen kilograms of food stuffs. Some people try to deride over this but they only expose their ignorance.

When a person is endowed with extremely pure and sanctified feelings and is covering the stages of angelic excellence, he is bound to consider food and beverages as impure and abominable.......... Physically, he may appear to be lean but his strength and powers will be at the highest.

In fact, the real food is the manifestation of the divine that help the growth. Avicenna has written in his book, *Isharat*. "When you are told that a devout person has given up food, solid and liquid, do not take it to be a falsehood. Take it to be true, because this is a part of the human nature and a habit among human habits."

NOTES :

1.	Ahl-e-Sunnat	:	Followers of the four Imams of Fiqh : Abu Hanifa, Ibn Hambal, Shafei and Maliki.
2.	Sadat	:	Descendants of Prophet Muhammad.
3.	*Shar'iat*	:	Islamic Laws : Muslim Personal Law.
4.	Imam Husain	:	Prophet Muhammad's grandson who was martyred at Karbala (now in Iraq) by the hordes of Yazid.
5.	Ali	:	Fourth Caliph of Islam and cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad.
6.	Amina	:	Also the name of Prophet Muhammad's Mother.
7.	*Tahajjud*	:	Late night prayer.
8.	Abdullah	:	Also the name of Prophet Muhammad's Father.
9.	Abul Qasim	:	Also the patronymic appelation *(kuniyat)* of Prophet Muhammad.
10.	Hazrat Khizr	:	Prophet who is said to have discovered the fountain of life *(Aab-e-Hayat)* and drunk from it to eternal existence.
11.	Mahdi	:	The rightly guided.
12.	Hazrat Sauban	:	Also spelt Thouban, Thawban and Soban; a companion of Prophet Muhammad and narrator of a number of *Ahadith* (Traditions of the Prophet).

13. This *Hadith* (Tradition) has been reported by Muhammad Ibn Majah and others in their collections of Prophet's traditions.

14. At the age of forty and continued for the rest of his life.

15. Baizavi : Also spelt Baydawi; his full name is Abdullah bin Umar al-Baydawi.

16. Author of *Tafseer-e-Mudrik* : Imam Abdallah Bin Ahmed Bin Mahmood al-Nasfi. The name of the book is *Tafseer-Mudrik al-Tanzeel O Haqaeq al-Taveel.*

17. *Tafseer-e-Kabeer* : By Imam Fakhruddin Raazi, who had memorised 100,000 traditions of the Prophet; author of over 200 books.

18. *Sharah-e-Arbaeen* by Kirmani and Nowawi : The full name of the latter is Abu Zakariya Muhiyuddin Bin Sharaf Nowawi; a well known Imam of Shafei school of Fiqh.

19. *Tauzeeh* : Full name of the book if *Tauzeeh-O-Talveeh*, a book on principles of Fiqh.

20. Muslim : Full name is Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri, author of a score of books including *Sahih Muslim* on Traditions of Prophet Muhammad.

21. Bukhari : Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari, traditionist and author of *Sahih Bukhari* on Prophet Muhammad's traditions.

22. Badr : The battle of Badr in the second year of the Hijrah.

23. Tabuk : The battle of Tabuk in the tenth year of Hijrah.

24. Gujarat : A state (Province) in western India.

25. Sindh : Now the southern province of Pakistan.

26-27-28 : Cities now in Afghanistan.

29. Makkah : Islam's holiest city now in Saudi Arabia.

30. Hadith : Abu Huraira quotes Prophet Muhammad as saying that Imam Mahdi will take the oath of fealty *(bai't)* from his followers between *"rukn"* and *"muqam"*, two important points in the holy mosque *(Ka'aba)* in Makkah.

31. Torah : The Book of Moses; The Pentateush; the Law of Moses.

32. Muahmmad is translated as "Glorified" and Ahmed as "Most Glorified." Muhammad by Martin Lings, New Delhi, 1983, p. 47.

33. Seir : "And he said, the Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them, he shined from Mount Paran (Faran Near Makkah), and he came with ten thousand saints; from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (Deuteronomy 33 : 2).

34. Hafsa : Daughter of second Caliph, Hazrath Umar, and wife of Prophet Muhammad.

35. Baithullah : The Holy Mosque at Makkah.

36. Umm Salama : Daughter of Abi Umayyah and wife of Prophet Muhammad.

37. *Ka'aba* : Holy Mosque at Makkah.

38. The author, Hazrat Syed Ali alias Makki Baday Miyan is the great great grandfather of eminent scholar Hazrat Syed Ashraf Shamsi Yadullahi. (Shamsi S/o Syed Ali S/o Syed Ashraf alias Aalim Acha Miyan S/o Syed Ali alias Makki Baday Miyan, author of the book, AL-QAUL AL-MAHMOOD.

39. *Iste'ab* : *AL-ISTE'AB FI MA'ARIFAT AL-AS-HAB* by Abu Umar ibn Al-Birr alias Yousuf Bin Abdallah.

40. Ibn Majah : Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Yazid bin Abdallah ibn Majah, author of the book *SUNAN IBN MAJAH.*

Hakim : Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Abdallah of Naishapur, Eminent *muhaddith*, who had memorised Prophet's traditions.

Abu Nu'yam : Abu Hu'yam Ahmed bin Abdallah Isfahani, another Muhaddith.

41. Muhammad by Martin Lings, New Delhi, 1983, p.327.

42. *Mualim-Ut-Tanzil* : Commentary on the Holy Quran in Persian by Abu Muhammad al-Husain bin Masood bin al-Farra Baghavi. He belonged to Shafei school of Fiqh.

43. Dawwani : Muhammad bin Sa'd al-Siddiqi al-Dawwani.

44. Paraclete : Also spelt Pereiklitos, Periclyte, Periqlytos, an intercessor (John XIV : 26 in Bible).

45. Herat : A town in north-west Afghanistan.

46. Shaikh Akbar : Shaikh Muhaiuddin ibn Ali al-Arabi, author of *FUTUHAT MAKKIAH, FUSUS UL-HIKAM* and others.

47. Ghazali : Imam Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Abul Hamid al-Ghazali, author of many books including *AHYA-UL-ULOOM.*

48. Mu'tazela : The name of a theological school which introduced speculative dogmatism into Islam, a sect which believes that all good is from Allah and all bad from man.